

# SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

MAR. 1920

20 CENTS



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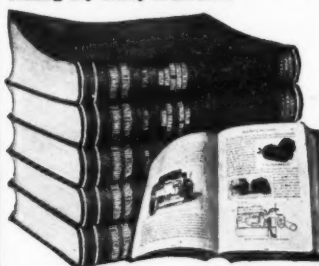
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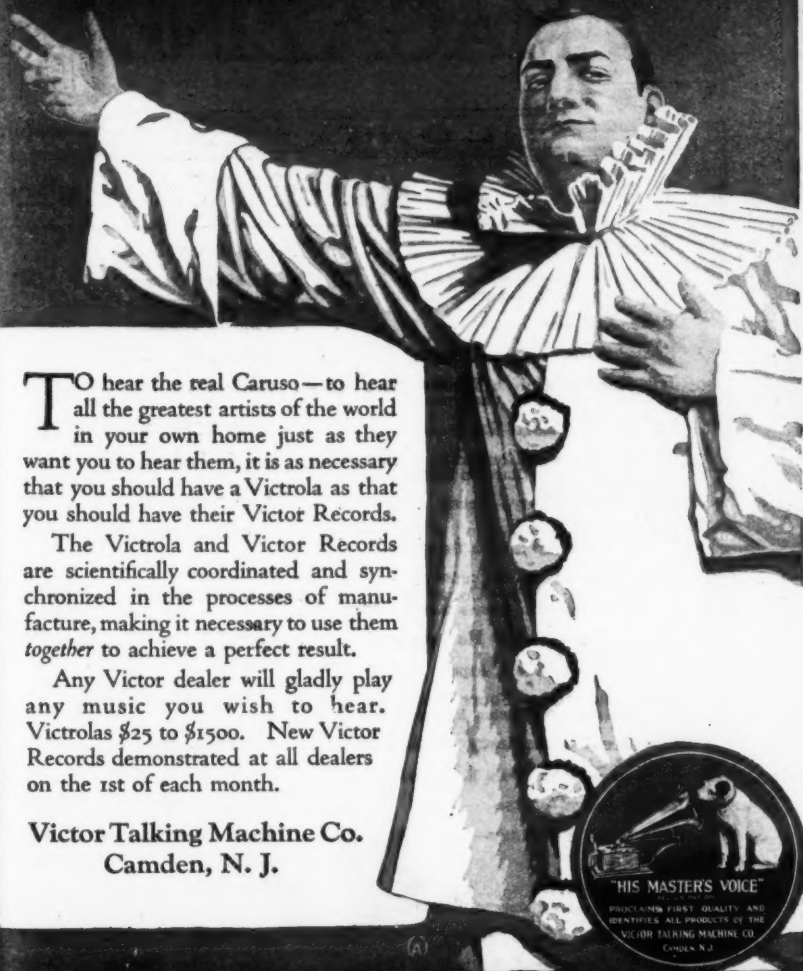
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Owing to labor difficulties, during which our entire plant was shut down, it will be necessary to issue SMITH'S MAGAZINE more frequently than monthly, in order to make up for lost time. Therefore, for the next few issues, it would be well for our readers to watch the news stands so that they may get each new number of SMITH'S upon its first appearance.

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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 6

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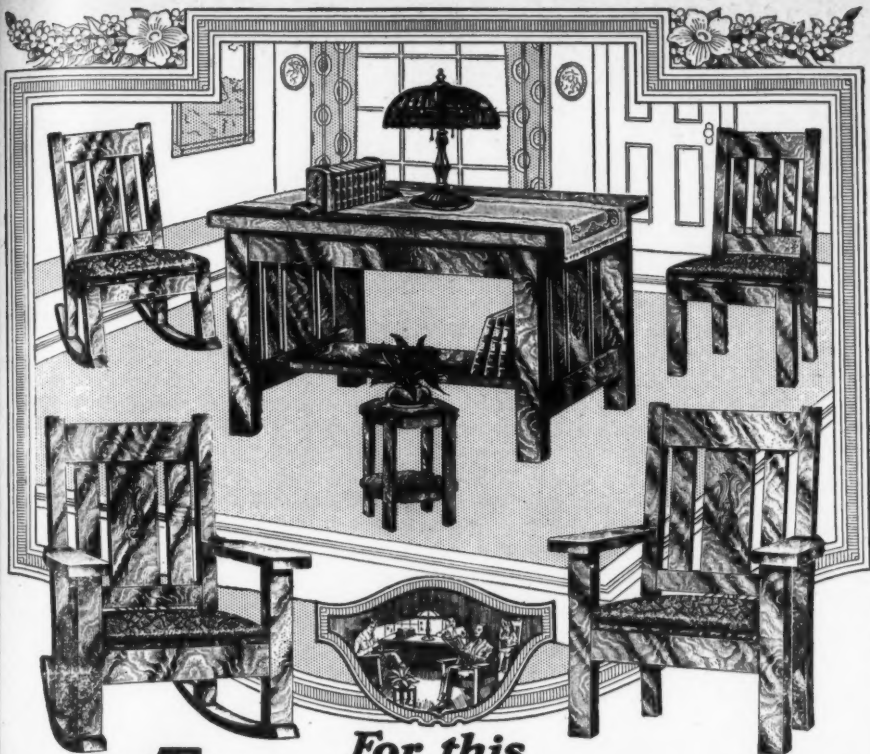
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Now imagine this massage applied not only to the surface of the body, but to every part, every organ, every single cell, internal as well as external. No wonder that a Violet Ray treatment makes one feel

"completely made over" and has such a delightful tonic effect upon the system. It acts upon the brain cells just as upon the other cells of the body, and that is why it is so often used by business men to overcome brain fog and mental sluggishness.

**Wonderful New Machine Now Brings Violet Ray Treatment to Your Home**

Violet Ray machines are now a part of the equipment of hospitals and sanitariums in the treatment of specific diseases and have been adopted by famous beauty specialists because of their effectiveness in eliminating skin diseases and blemishes such as eczema, blackheads, pimples, etc., bring-

ing the glow of healthful color to the complexion.

It is almost impossible to list all the various disorders for which Violet Rays are used.

For example, they remove the cause of headaches, catarrh, nervousness and insomnia. The same principle applies to the treatment of neuritis, rheumatism, lumbago, indigestion and neuralgia.

Hitherto, however, the costly apparatus necessary for giving Violet Ray treatment

has limited them only to the well-to-do who could afford the time and money to go to an establishment equipped with the Violet Ray machine.

But now scientists have perfected a new Violet Ray machine, operating on the same principle, but smaller in size, more convenient to use and infinitely less expensive in cost.

This little machine adapted to home use and requires no special electrical equipment. The wire which supplies current simply fits into any electric light sockets and the machine is ready for use. Where no current is available, special equipment furnished at small extra cost.

Now, anyone can enjoy all the benefits of the famous Violet Ray treatment. Those who are suffering from some particular ailment will appreciate the wonderful help this handy new instrument brings to them. And others will be delighted to avail themselves of its wonderful tonic effects, creating health and strength, vitalizing the energizing the cells of the brain and body.

Already users of the machine have written enthusiastic letters to the manufacturers, telling of the suits obtained through it—how it enables them to sleep better—how it has soothed their nervous troubles—how it has cleared and beautified the complexion. And even those who thought they were well before that Violet Rays have brought them an entirely new feeling of health, strength and energy.

**Interesting Book Sent Free**

It is impossible to tell in this small space all about the Violet Ray—what it is and how it acts and all the disorders and diseases it is used to treat successfully. But an interesting book has been prepared, fully illustrated, which describes in full the Violet Ray treatment and explains the New Violet Ray machine for home use. It tells just how to use the machine to get the same results as are obtained by physicians, druggists, healers, sanitarians and beauty specialists. A copy of this book will be sent free on receipt of your request on a postcard or the coupon below.

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This illustration shows the wonderful new machine which enables anyone to enjoy the remarkable Violet Ray treatment at home.



This man is using the Violet Ray machine for a local trouble—in this case rheumatism. Clothing offers no obstruction to the passage of the Violet Ray.

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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 30

MARCH, 1920

Number 6

## Domestic Preferred

By Katharine Haviland Taylor

Author of "Cecilia of the Pink Roses," "Barbara of Baltimore," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

**A remarkably human, vivid story of family life—of wandering affection—and of love that was not love, told by one of the cleverest of our younger writers.**

### CHAPTER I.

VERY often the creators of arts are not the sort of people who should marry. Theirs is a constant mental childbirth, and there is a soreness of the mental muscles that comes after an achievement which argues ill for any one who happens to be near and enough known to speak to frankly. If these people who model from emotions *must* marry, they should select, with great care, something with a cow mind, an inexhaustible good nature, and a forgiving spirit.

These qualities Stanley K. Johns had got in his wife, and he recognized this, the while he deplored the fact that she gave him no stimulus.

It was a spring morning when he admitted that, a morning that was dangerous in its call to life and to live. Apple blossoms were just fluttering out of winter-blackened boughs, greens were becoming clamorous and the least bit too noisy. Tulips shot up in their silly, stiff way.

Stanley K. Johns saw everything, and from the sort of work he did, felt more than he saw; and because of it all, he admitted that Mary was "hampering."

To be sure, she made him comfortable,

but, good heavens! what was comfort? He wondered suddenly what they were going to have for lunch. It was the mind that mattered. Mental stimulus, that was it. But he stopped reflection quickly. Years of faithfulness and patience rolled before him.

"I am a devil," he said aloud, staring across his desk.

He sighed, tried to forget apple blossoms, outdoors, and the call of Pan, and to remember the twenty-second chapter of "Dying Blaze." His heroine was in Venice, and Venice would not appear. He could not feel it nor smell it. He wanted Venice in an energetic rain and his heroine and hero in the shelter of a crumbling stone archway. Its pastel, taupe-hued, somber background would be a splendid one for the first showing of their love. The public likes romantic setting for romance. Stanley K. Johns never forgot that, although their call had not influenced him enough to pull him from the pedestal of good and careful work, which he did. Sometimes his verses were almost great. One or two will live.

He dropped his pen after some minutes and muttered:

"No use!" Again the call of April



was with him. "I'm forty-five," he confided to a small bronze head of Dante which Mary had given him. He silently deplored the banal touch that it gave to his room.

In the garden there was a muffled scream. He supposed Roger, his almost-seventeen-year-old son had returned from school, and was chasing Elizabeth with a snake. Snakes and clocks were Roger's especial passion and neither of these objects ran very well after he was through with them. Stanley shuddered. He had always had too much imagination for snakes even in the boy years. None of the children were his in the sense of his vivid, imaginative quality. Perhaps it was as well. It saved suffering.

There was a silence, and he began again to work and then—the door opened.

"Well?" he said irritably, as his wife entered.

"The children are making a hellish racket in the garden," he went on. "I'm trying to write, but—" he stopped, words failing. "Do you realize," he went on in a repressed tone, "that our daily bread comes from my pen?"

"I know, dear," said his wife soothingly, "but I had to call you. Mr. Donnelly of Donnelly & Franklin is downstairs. It's about the dramatic rights again. If I'd only *seen* that contract! I'm afraid you might as well give up, Stanley."

"I won't! Give up? My dear, you mistake your man! Never! Where's Wigglesley? What, in God's name, do I employ a secretary for? Is it necessary to *burst* in on me in this way, destroying a morning's preparation for work, making my visions into a hash with your realities?"

"My dear!" said his wife.

"Well," he ended lamely, "it's damnable!" He surveyed his wife with anger. She was a comfortable-looking individual, but that was all. This morning

she had been shopping and wore a brown wreck of a hat which had evidently been designed for heavy work and not for speed. Some one, without a hampering sense of beauty, had built it for a woman who wanted "a nice, sensible hat that I can wear out in the rain."

"Where did you get that hat?" asked Stanley, forgetting contracts.

Mary brightened.

"Down at Miss Hillis' little place," she answered. "You know, she has such a hard time getting on."

"I should think she would have!"

"Why, dear? I'm sure her prices are reasonable. When I heard that she was really in need, I went in and said that I wanted something for scuff wear."

"You got it," interrupted Stanley, laughing, and then getting up, stretched. "You know," he said, "sometimes your density is positively refreshing!"

Mary smiled up at her husband. There was a quality in her smile that made up for all beauty lacks, and even for the hat! And then, suddenly, she leaned over and kissed the rough tweed of his coat shoulder, blushing hotly after she did it. Then she leaned over and plucked a piece of lint from the sleeve of her husband. Stanley, good nature restored, laughed loudly.

"You are so lovely," he said, "and I know it, but before you came in I was thinking of eloping with April and hunting for romance. You know I sometimes do that."

"Yes," she replied, "I know you do, often. And sometimes romance is rather concrete. Now, isn't it, dear? You remember that Margraves girl who didn't wear corsets and padded around in the dew without shoes?"

Stanley laughed again, but sheepishly.

"Yes, I remember her," he admitted.

"I *am* an ass!"

Mary turned to the door.

"Sometimes you are," she agreed,

"but I love you and I'm sure I'm never bored! And I know you'll always come back to me to have the buttons put on your underwear."

"And to have you pick lint off my clothes. Going to find it on Saint Peter's robe, Mary? Whatever will you do up there if you can't pick up the children's books and coats and caps and overshoes?"

"I don't know," she answered seriously, "for you see, to stupid persons like me, picking up after, and making the people they love comfortable, is heaven!" She opened the door and then turned back. "You're coming down? I'm really afraid you'll have to, dear. It's the only way."

"I'll be down," he replied, looking longingly toward Venice, which was growing real upon a sheet of paper.

Twenty years before, Stanley K. Johns had met Mary Ludlow and had immediately answered to her peace. He had been acclaimed a genius even then, and the applauding had begun. He began to read his verses in softly lit drawing-rooms and to avoid the invitations of people who wanted a drawing card and to accept those of



"It is damnable," he remarked, "and it will upset me terribly. And right in the middle of 'Years of Gray'! Ellery James wants it in time for the fall trade, too."

people who might prove to be one. He had been frank in using every ticket that would take him up the hill. He had been younger in energy, of course, but even then he had begun to suffer from reaction. And he met Mary.

"Oh, God!" he said fervently, "the peace of you!"

And Mary, who would always take what was offered with gratitude, was content to accept a peace hunger in the place of love. She accepted him; and after Stanley married her he fell as deeply in love with her as he could—work was his real love—took all from her that he wanted, forgot her between wants, found himself immensely comfortable, and was amazed when he found that Mary was to have a baby. He was not pleased.

"It is damnable," he remarked, "and it will upset me terribly! And right in the middle of 'Years of Gray'! Ellery James wants it in time for the fall trade, too. Will it yell?"

Mary hoped not very much.

"Well, keep it out of my way," he said with cruel selfishness, and then turned back to his desk. After a few moments he looked up again. "How did this happen?" he asked in an accusing voice.

"I don't know, dear," said Mary, sitting down. "But you know, things like that *do* happen!"

Stanley, who had been writing in a very free manner about a certain selfish woman who evaded having children, swore softly. On paper, his ideals were beautifully high; in life, they sometimes slipped.

"And you know," said Mary shyly, "I think you won't mind after it gets here and grows a little and begins to talk. They're *cunning*!"

Stanley arose and put his hands on his wife's shoulders. He began to feel the greatness of the happening and to feel a little awed. And he felt ashamed of his reception of the news.

"Am I a devil to live with, Mary?" he asked sharply.

"Oh, no, dear!" she answered. "Sometimes, when you're a little impatient, I realize that you're a genius and that I mustn't expect you to be like other men, and then I honestly like it!"

"I don't believe I've been very considerate of you in any way," he said, closing his hands tightly on her fat-cushioned shoulders. The road had not always been easy for Mary and she stumbled as she answered.

"But you've loved me so much, dear," she said, "that it's made me understand lots I—I wouldn't otherwise."

Stanley had an unpleasant sensation. His hands dropped to his sides.

"Before God, I do love you!" he said too loudly. "Better than any one else, any one else! But I've forgotten you, too."

"Not always," contradicted Mary, but the times of which she was thinking were the times when she had been the most completely absent from his consciousness.

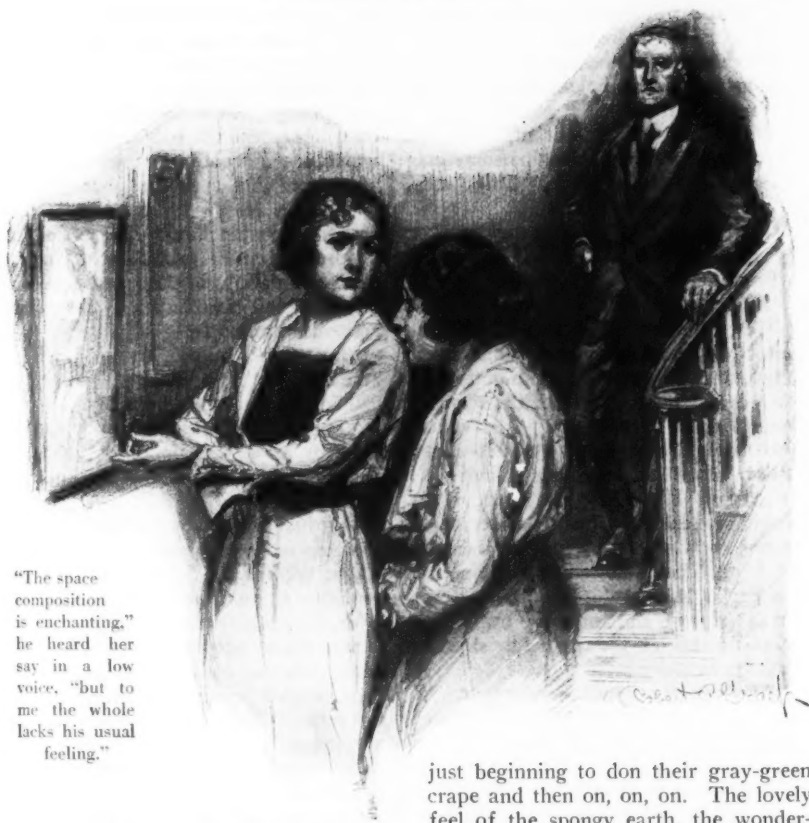
"I love you!" echoed Stanley. He was making a justification to his conscience.

Tears stood in Mary's eyes.

"Well, I worship *you*!" she whispered, and at that moment she was beautiful.

After that had come a very sizable number of novels, three books of verse, and two plays, on Stanley's side; and two more children on Mary's. And she dutifully kept them out of his path and saw to it that he wore heavy enough or light enough underwear and that his socks were darned and that there were buttons where buttons should be.

People generally said that, of course, she was good, a very good little woman, but—well, didn't it seem as if a man like Stanley K. Johns must feel her lacks terribly?



"The space composition is enchanting," he heard her say in a low voice, "but to me the whole lacks his usual feeling."

And then, more years and an April morning, when Stanley was forty-five! Romance whistled to him and he turned from her, aware that he had a son of seventeen and two daughters, of fourteen and ten. And contracts hitched, and Venice was elusive and he was—old!

## CHAPTER II.

A walk in the spring dusk restored a sort of balance. Down a country road, past the mansion of the man who manufactured motor trucks, across a little covered bridge, a halt on the other side to look at the sorrowing willows,

just beginning to don their gray-green crape and then on, on, on. The lovely feel of the spongy earth, the wonderful let down of aloneness and silence, drew a soft cover over Stanley's nerves.

The whir of an approaching motor jarred and made him step to the side of the road.

"Give yuh a lift?" inquired the genial Mr. Branders, who told one with equal frankness and impartiality just how much it cost him to run his car, educate his daughters, or "furnish" his library.

"No, thank you," answered Stanley Johns, the effort to be at least decently appreciative, showing in his voice. "Been sitting all day," he added as the motor again began its whirring.

"Motor trucks!" he thought with a sneer, as the powerful car rolled on.

"A nut," said the son of the motor manufacturer as he searched for his cigarette case.

"Yep," agreed the parent, "but," he went on less surely, "must be something nice about him. Nice little wife. Mamma likes her."

"All right, if you wear smoked glasses," agreed the son of the house of motors.

And Stanley trudged on.

The evening had settled and it was one of those fair gray ones, which make the stars look as if they'd gotten up too early. Two or three of the stronger ones blazed in the sky. The others looked pale and wan. A little moon slid in place and began her ruling.

Stanley K. Johns sat down on a broad stone wall. Then he remembered Mary and doubled up his coat beneath him. The book danced before him and he began to feel sure of it. All the cruel pull of the morning was gone. Looking up at the peaceful sky, he smiled.

"This is my time," he thought. "I have no business to fool with April mornings. Those belonged to me twenty years ago."

There was no hurt in the realization. The realization was even a cloak that shielded him from cold blasts, or too warm, electrically charged, sweet rains. Across the hazy fields the little village courthouse clock made itself heard. It was hours past dinner time.

"I never knew," he said half aloud, "that Mary knew about that Margraves girl." There was a relief in the fact that she did and loved him in spite of it. It had not been serious and yet at the time it had seemed so. "Poor Mary!" he thought and grew so violently tender that it hurt in his throat. Stanley slipped from the wall and turned his face toward home.

He opened his door. In the stream

of light Mary stood silhouetted, pudgy and badly corseted, and the anxiety which showed on her face reflected in her voice.

"Stanley," she called, "did you have on a heavy enough coat? I've been so worried. I wanted to send Beatrice after you with a muffler, but she had her music lesson to practice. Your dinner's by the fire," she ended, as laughing, Stanley pushed past her.

"Hello, dad," said the seventeen-year-old who was curled up in a deep chair and eating an apple.

"Beatrice," called Mary, "father's home."

The piano stopped instantly.

"This is nice," said Stanley, as he sank in a deep chair before the fire and absently gave his coat to the waiting Mary.

The hall was lit by candles, with an oil lamp ready to make a reading light. Above the fireplace hung a scarlet cope, generously embroidered in gold. Its color flared in the candlelight. Florentine chairs peeped from dusky corners. Curiously inappropriate furnishings tangled and yet—curiously—did not seem to quarrel. An unframed bit of modern painting here, there a copy of a master who belonged to the land of Tuscany, and books, books, books, their colors echoing in the rugs which lay on the dark, shining floor.

"Lovely room," said Stanley with appreciation, and then, sipping his tea, he said with a change of tone:

"Mary, this is cold!"

"My dear, I'm so sorry!" she said, getting up hurriedly. "I'll make more."

She left the room and on the way stooped to pick up a cap and a battered library book which had slid from an overcrowded table.

"Mother'll always do that," said Roger, throwing his apple core in the fire, where it sizzled wrathfully. "She must have been a vacuum cleaner in some other life."



"Did mother tell you about the letter?" asked a wide-eyed little girl of ten who came from the alcove which held the piano. A kick from her brother made her wince and turn suddenly to her schoolbooks.

"What letter?" asked Stanley.

"Oh, none—I—I only wondered," stumbled the small girl.

"I'd like to know," said Stanley, pushing aside his tray irritably, "*what* you are talking about? This sort of thing tries all my patience! I dislike the air of mystery and why I should be kept in the dark. I will ask your mother when she comes in. Where is Elizabeth?"

"At the Branders'," answered Roger.

"The Branders," echoed Stanley. His voice was not pleased.

"They're nice people," said the boy. "Of course, they don't go in for the same sort of thing that we do, but they have good times, in a different way, and I like 'em."

"No doubt!" said Stanley, shrugging his shoulders. His son got up, picked up a book from the center table, a long, low affair, and wandered from the room. Beatrice sat down by the table and began to trace a breakfast food advertisement on a thin sheet of paper. Mary, her face hot from hurry, came in bearing a freshly made pot of tea.

"I'm so sorry, dear," she said between quick breaths. "I didn't know just when you were coming in. Ethel thought she saw you, but it must have been Sephus Juggans."

"For God's sake, do I look like Juggans?" exploded Stanley.

"No, dear. Of course not. But it was quite dark, and she saw a man sort of mooning along——"

"What is the matter with you that makes you get so out of breath?" demanded Stanley. Mary sat down and answered apologetically.

"I suppose I am getting old," she said. "You know, I realized it this

morning when you spoke of the call of April—wasn't that what you said? All it means to me is that the blankets have to be washed. The laundry simply ruins them, so this year——"

"Yes, yes! What's all this about a letter? You know, Mary, or should, that I hate mysteries."

"I know, dear, but I thought that after dinner would be a better time to——" but she got up as she spoke and went to the table where the afternoon's mail lay like a cubist picture, in its sprawling angles against the deep-toned wood.

"It's from Alexander Kinkead," she said, hunting through the pile, and then to Beatrice, "I believe you'd better go now, dearie, just for a little while. Go see Ethel. She's doing a crayon portrait of her uncle—poor man died last spring—and maybe she'd let you help with the whiskers. And you can come back later, dear. Oh, here it is. Well, Stanley, from the letter he must be an old friend of yours. Was he the one whose wife died?"

"Yes, yes! Studied together in Paris. You know all about it. Go on."

Mary sat down again.

"He's an architect, of some note, isn't he?" she inquired.

"He is! For God's sake, Mary, give me that letter! The way you prolong the agony——"

He took the letter, scanned it carefully, and then exploded. Mary looked anxiously toward the door. She hoped Beatrice had closed it as she went and that she was safely in the kitchen.

"His daughter!" said Stanley, after he was able to talk with some rational thought. "*Here* while he does reconstruction work in France! Simply because back in the stone age I was godfather to the howling brat. Mary, I will not have it! Twenty-two! The most damnable age at which they are permitted to live. *It cannot be!* Under my feet the entire time, or else having



"Let me go to town for you," said Diana. "I'm sure I could buy a steak or sausage or whatever you want."

pups of suitors around, singing ragtime while she bangs it out, using one set of bass notes for everything! My dear——"

"It might not be so bad," said Mary weakly.

"Oh, don't 'be glad!'" wailed Stanley Johns. "I am not fit to stand it! It cannot be! You know me, Mary. I am a man of my word. Once said, done!"

A gleam of something which approached mischief flashed across Mary's face, but it faded as she began her work.

"What are you going to reply?" she asked. "It seems a pity to hurt him if you were once the friends the letter implies you were, but, of course, you know best. Did you live together in Paris?"

"Yes. I've told you so a million

times. And he *was* good to me. Much older; knew the ropes. Fact is, I was strapped about half the time, and half the time he paid all the rent. Never let me settle. Before I married you, Mary, the money didn't come as it does now, or else it reaches better now, although I don't see why that should be. Let's see, what does he say about her?"

Mary rose to hand him the letter and while up removed a piece of lint from his shoulder. He moved impatiently as she did it, reading half aloud, here a word, a silence, or a groan, and another word.

"You will find her an interesting child.—'The devil I will!'—Half mad with anxiety to know where to leave her. 'Hm—' Unusual disposition. 'Brain storms, Mary! I won't have it. My whole soul rebels at anything but calm!'" This time Mary openly smiled. "Musical. Have to tell her I cannot stand so much as a pin dropping while I work. No, I cannot stand it! It simply can't be! What's her name?"

"Diana."

"Then she weighs two hundred if she weighs an ounce! Can't stand the type. Puckery mouth, pig eyes—no, Mary. I suppose I shall lose Kinkead's friendship, but I shall never consent! Never!"

Mary sighed.

"Don't sigh," said Stanley. "You know I hate it. Sighs are the winds that make the mental candle waver and burn low. Might dress that up and use it sometime. Not so bad! Has she any other especial tastes?"

"She does some poetry," said Mary weakly.

"Poetry!" cried Stanley. "*Poetry!* And she would read it aloud! Probably when I wanted to read aloud—Mary, stop picking up the children's books. *I can't stand it!* No, it can never be! I will write him now!"

He left the room on the bound. Mary settled by the lamp, first getting

a basket piled high with undarned stockings. When her husband came back she looked up and smiled.

"It's a good letter," he admitted, "and any man of reason would understand. How could I, simply for the sake of friendship, have a child of that sort under foot every hour of the day? I was kind, but frank. Have Wigglesley post it in the morning."

Mary rolled up a pair of socks.

"Very well," she answered, and then took the letter. It did not, however, go with the other letters waiting to be posted. It went under the strip of tapestry which lay across the table.

Another April morning, the next one, found Stanley Johns thinking a good deal about the Paris days. Contrary to his usual custom, he did not go to his workroom immediately after breakfast, but went to the great hall, puttering around there in a manner which confessed a mental burden.

"Wigglesley mailed those letters before breakfast?"

"Yes," answered Mary, who was helping Beatrice get into a school coat.

"Well, what did the fool do that for?"

"He always does. I don't know. He gets up early, you know. Tighten your hair ribbon, dearie."

"Yes, I know, but it necessitates a trip for me. I must go out."

"Where, dear?"

"If you must know, to the telegraph office. I am going to telegraph Kinkead not to read that letter and to send his daughter. Have to—no other way."

Mary got the letter.

"It's here," she said apologetically. "I thought perhaps you'd like to see it again. I've decided that the blue room will be nicest for her, Stanley. We want to make her happy."

"Oh, of course!" he answered with a groan, and started up the stairs. "Don't ever do that again!" he called

from the second landing. "This time it happened to be all right, but it might not please me on another occasion!"

"Yes, dear," answered Mary absently, and then: "What is it, Ethel? The butcher? I'll be right out. Where's my purse? Hurry, Beatrice. Mamma doesn't want you to be late again to-day. Here's your hat, dearie. Just tell Miss White that you couldn't get that problem and that mother couldn't, either."

### CHAPTER III.

Diana Kinkad sat in a chair car which was rolling toward Munsey and admitted that she was "madly thrilled" at the prospect of the daily encounter of Stanley K. Johns. She began to imagine and rehearse scenes in which she and the novelist only, figured; scenes that she had begun to build on the first day she heard about her being planted in the Johns household.

Diana admitted that she "adored people who did things!" This heading did not cover anything so banal as cooking, keeping house, or, largest and greatest of all professions, making a home. Those were left for the people who did not do things. One suffered them to be about so that coal was ordered, and so that there were clean towels in the bathrooms and food on the table at proper intervals. Otherwise they were useless.

"Munsey's the next stop, miss," announced the porter, and thrilling even more madly, Diana arose and was helped into her exceedingly well-tailored coat. She bit her lips to make them red, hoped she had on enough powder and not too much, and then, with the slowing of the train, followed the porter, her hatbox, a suit case, golf sticks, tennis racket, and umbrella, out on the platform.

"Is this really Munsey?" she asked uncertainly.

Her dreams had not pictured a dull

little station with a bleak background of new America, looking as if it had sprung to life over night and hadn't had time to wait for a proper coat of paint. She had dreamed, instead, of something duplicating a doll's-house English village as a background for her romance.

"Yassum," answered the porter.

The train started and she found herself alone. She had expected to be met by the great man himself. Thought of her father and his adoring care made something smart beneath her eyelids. Families she considered rather absurd, and yet at times—

A young voice with a grating, lilting, pitching tendency broke in on her.

"Are you Miss Diana Kinkad?"

"Yes," she answered the frank-faced boy who wore a badly fitting, too-small suit.

"I'm Roger Johns," he said, "and the donkey cart's back of the station, but I don't believe we can haul all this truck up at once. Of course, we can try. I wouldn't lay that bag down. There's tobacco juice all over the place."

Diana clutched her bag and dismissed Roger from the list of even "just possible."

"Nice trip?" asked Roger, somehow aware that something had offended.

"Quite comfortable, thank you, but the service now, you know! Rather, the lack of it!"

"Well, who wants it in America?" demanded Roger, suddenly conscious of his old suit. "Here's the cart. I hope you don't get seasick. Two-wheeled ones pitch like all get out. Hop in."

Diana hopped. The going up to the house helped her. From the dismal small town they turned down a road that should have been called a lane, and then across a covered bridge which spanned a willow-guarded stream. First greening fields swelled gently on either side of the road. Newly plowed earth of red cast sent out its fresh smell.



Billy Branders, the openly adoring, was chasing her with a caterpillar.

"It's like a bit of England," said Diana, noting the hedges and trim little cottages by the way.

"Dad says so," answered the boy. "He goes abroad almost every summer. We stay at home with mother. Say, look here, where do you think you're going to play golf? There isn't any links near here. We have a tennis

court, but it isn't much good. Elizabeth plays a great game! She's fourteen and she's awfully glad you're coming to visit us. We all are." After which dutiful speech Roger subsided and Diana, after a faint "Thank you so much," followed suit. How could any one of Mr. Johns' sensitive temperament endure it, she wondered,





"Don't—darling boy," she whispered unsteadily. "I—I'll cry again."

looking at the great, gaunt boy beside her. His finger nails and floppings around must annoy, of course.

"Here we are," said Roger, getting down to open a gate.

"How sweet!" said Diana impulsively.

"It is sorta nice," he answered, and then the door opened and a little, dumpy woman, whose hair had very evidently been dressed without the aid of a hand glass, stood smiling.

"It's Diana, isn't it?" she said warmly. "My dear, I'm so glad you've come! We're going to try to make you happy. Come in! This is Beatrice.

Go help Roger with the things, pettie. Elizabeth, come here! She's a little bashful. Are you tired?"

"Not in the least, thank you," answered Diana.

This woman the wife of Stanley K. Johns! This woman!

"I'm glad of that, Diana. I'm going to call you by your first name right off. I hope you don't mind, but it always seems to me so much nicer."

"I hope you will," replied Diana coolly.

"Stanley said," went on Mary, "last night I think it was, that he couldn't realize that it had been all these years

since he stood up at your christening. Roger, don't set that there. Father might fall over it if he came down in a hurry. But time does fly. Maybe you'd like to go up to your room and brush up? Beatrice will show you where it is. And the bathroom, dearie, and see that there's a clean wash cloth. Give her one with the blue edges."

Beatrice danced ahead and Diana followed. At the head of the stairs the little girl walked on tiptoe, and a closed door explained why. On it was a white placard on which was written simply: "Silence."

"Oh," thought Diana, "*he* is there!"

In her own room at last and Beatrice dismissed, she sat down. She didn't know whether she would tell him immediately that she had written a play in blank verse or not. She imagined she'd better wait to find out how easily he was approached. Perhaps her being with them would help him. She hoped so. "Poor thing!" she thought compassionately, with the memory of the utterly commonplace family who had greeted her and done all the ordinary things by way of making her comfortable. The room was sweet, blue-walled and restful; a four-poster bed with dotted swiss skirts and a nightcap, and at the windows fluttering curtains of this same, simple, satisfying stuff. Near the bed a Della Robbia plaque and a pie-crust table on which stood two candles and books ready for night reading. There were splint-bottomed chairs and on one broad, white window sill a blazing lot of yellow tulips sprawled in a glass of rainbow hues. There was a sense of rest in the room because there were not too many things. Diana's own room flashed before her: A gray-walled place with a lavender floor and silver and lavender Japanese embroidered hangings; one gray Persian prayer rug, and furniture designed by one of the most modern and insane of decorators.

"Without soul expression, certainly," said Diana, rising and looking about her, "but there is nothing that jars. I shan't mind." Then, going to stand before a tall mahogany chest of drawers, she began to take down her long, lovely hair and to arrange it in the most becoming way.

The afternoon had been devilish for Stanley K. Johns, and added to that was the consciousness of the arrival of "that child." He swore bitterly as the big gong rang in the lower hall, and then went down the stairs quietly, his rubber heels making no sound. Back to him, before a bit of pastel work which Davies had given him, stood a slender piece of loveliness. She was impertinently measuring the figure of a man who stood by an overturned boat.

"The space composition is enchanting," he heard her say in a low, perhaps too-cultivated voice, "but to me the whole lacks his usual feeling."

Mary, who was listening respectfully, but without as much expression as a goldfish, remarked: "Is that so?" and looked at the picture as if it were a kangaroo, after the young critic had dismissed it. Stanley smiled. If the young person was a modern, at least the spring and summer would not be filled with boredom. He spoke as he stepped on the last landing, a short four steps from the floor level, and was surprised at his own cordiality.

"Diana," he heard himself say, "greet your godfather!"

She turned sharply and her face carried out the promise of her wonderfully poised, gracefully slender neck and lovely head.

"You!" she said simply, holding out a slender, cool, eloquent hand. Her eyes were of the fastening and clinging type, and they fed themselves on the face of a famous novelist. "You were photographed there," she said softly, motioning toward a corner where a re-

fectory table was flanked by a bench which Stanley had found in a cottage near the Certose of Florence. "I have that one framed," went on Diana. "That picture, in its expression of—feeling—of you, is so satisfying!"

Stanley smiled. To his credit be it said that hero worship amused rather than flattered him.

"I don't like it," said Mary honestly. "It looked as if it had been light-struck or something. You couldn't see his tie,

it was so dark under his chin; and the photographer blocked out his ear because it made a jarring note."

"Well, there was some excuse for that," explained Roger. "Dad did look like a member of the bunny tribe."

"And I gave him the tie," said Elizabeth, "and it didn't show one bit!"

"But an echo of the soul's cover, after all," said Diana, disposing of photographs.

Again Mary looked baffled, but with



Stanley had Diana's hands held tightly in his, pressed against his chest. Mary could see his lips move.

Ethel's appearance at the dining-room door she brightened.

"Come, children," she said, "dinner's ready, and there's cheese soufflé and it'll fall if we don't hurry. Roger, will you please bring another chair? We're short of dining-room chairs. Beatrice, are your hands clean? That's mother's good girl. Where's Wiggy? He likes soufflés, so I hope he won't be late. Elizabeth, don't drag your book to the table. You know daddy doesn't like you to read in your lap. Here we are, Ethel. Diana, you can sit up there by Mr. Johns. Oh, Stanley, haven't you a napkin? I declare I don't see how I forgot that. Diana, this is Mr. Wiggsley, Mr. Johns' secretary. Miss Kinkead, Mr. Wiggsley. Haven't you one, either? Ethel, we forgot the napkins."

There was a scraping of chairs, a confused settling, and then the slap of the doors of the corner cupboard where Mrs. Johns was hunting napkins. After she found them she settled, puffing, and smiled down the long table at her husband; but he did not see it, for he was busy answering a question of Diana's, concerning the strength of space composition in the work of a modern painter.

Diana talked well, with the assurance that a smart school and travel had given her, and the knowledge that a life of skimming gives of facts. Not a modern name connected with the arts was unknown to her, not a maker of poems unknown; but not one art was really known to her, nor one poem absorbed. But of this fact, only Wiggy, blinking through his heavy-lensed glasses, was aware.

"I suppose," he thought, "she can read a review on a book cover and talk of the book as if she had read it ten times, while I read it ten times and can't talk of it at all. She *can* do it and she *is* pretty!"

The rest were frankly charmed and more than all the rest, Mary. The



Breathless, she turned and slunk around the rock. "What shall I do?" she moaned.

summer looked smoother, visions of an irritable and constantly annoyed husband faded. She was so happy that he liked her! She smiled around the table again, but no one answered her smile, for every one was busy listening to Diana talk. Mary was incapable of little jealousy; she simply felt a relief and gratitude.

At eleven that night, while Mary was getting ready for bed, Stanley lay on his bed and talked. His talk with her was thought aloud, for he didn't consider her opinion often nor want expression of it. She was there and a pleasant person to talk *at*. And he now talked *at* her, smoking one of the long, Russian cigarettes he cultivated.

"The child has a mind of a sort," he said, blowing smoke high. "Wiggsley said she was a nineteen-hundred-and-eighteen bromide. Sometimes the young man forgets his place. Followed me

upstairs to get some letters and I said: 'What do you think of our lovely Diana, Wiggsley?' and he replied: 'Beautiful, but an accomplished thief. Not one word she said to-night was original, bet on it!' Added something about her reading the smarter magazines that keep one up, 'Vanity Always' and that type, and says she pikes. Now on the contrary, I would say there was a pregnant seed."

"Yes, dear," said Mary, slipping out of her shoes.

"Thought possibilities, and what eyes!" He laughed suddenly, looking up at the ceiling through a whirl of smoke rings. "See her look at me?" he inquired with open acknowledgment of his powers.

"She said she'd read every word you'd ever written," said Mary. "Of course, the child realizes how wonderful you are. How could she help it?"

"I have had my share of praise," admitted Stanley, "but I've earned it, too."

"Of course, dear," said Mary.

"You might say I've made my way unaided," went on Stanley, slowly inhaling cigarette smoke, and if Mary's eyes were hurt, no one saw them. "Family, too," he added. "Great drawback for a man of my type. Mary, open the window, will you please? Hot in here."

Mary opened the window and then she straightened Mr. Stanley K. Johns' clothes, which lay in a tangled heap. After which she went to the bureau and let down her sparse hair. She brushed it absently and then turned out the light. Bed felt very wonderful in its softness. Even the simple arrangements for Diana had made a good deal of extra work.

"I was tired!" she said with a sigh. "I had to take Elizabeth's winter clothes from the blue-room cupboard and put them in the attic. I meant to do it yesterday," went on Mary, "but somehow I put it off." Then, in the

next bed, Stanley turned over and slept, loudly and unmistakably. Mary smiled. Sometimes he was so wakeful. It was his work that made him so. How the child had interested him, and how fortunate it was! He needed interests. They'd been married a long, long time! "Sometimes I think he forgets me entirely," she whispered in the dark, and then she smiled. After all, that meant that he was comfortable. And if one made one's loved ones comfortable, what more could one ask? Mary shifted her weight. The bed creaked. She was tired! How her back did ache! And six o'clock to-morrow morning to start Roger out on a fishing trip. Oh, well, to-morrow morning she would feel differently. A sudden thought made her sit up in bed.

"I wonder whether Ethel set bread?" she questioned, and then she fumbled for her slippers and a bath robe.

She went trudging down the stairs, and into the kitchen. "She did," she said aloud, as her light found the table and a large blue bowl which was covered by a tea towel. A mouse scurried. "My goodness!" she said loudly, "I didn't know there were any around. I must get some traps to-morrow!" and then, somewhat wearily, she made her way back to bed.

Meanwhile, Diana Kinkead was on her knees before an open window. Her room was dark and the little twinkle of stars turned the world to a place of magic. "If I can help him," she murmured, "aid him, what more would I ask—could any one ask! To serve the arts or those who make the arts; to let those live who give our lives the things of greatest joy!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

The first encounter with Stanley K. Johns that Diana felt to be satisfying, came early in May. She had been with Elizabeth over at the Branders' where she had heard that Julie Branders had,



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during the year while she was in a Paris school, "cost papa" ten thousand, five hundred and ninety-nine dollars and thirty-two cents.

"It set me back," confided papa, "twenty-five thousand, six hundred dollars and twenty-five cents to educate the two of 'em up, but I wanted they should have it!" Julie and her sister Marguerite, who sat on the steps of the broad porch near the feet of their dad, smiled up at him. They were gloriously happy and entirely unconscious of it. Diana, who was always alive to the incomplete, envied, even while she despised this quality in them. "You're so entirely satisfied!" she complained to Marguerite, who was nearest her age.

"I suppose we are," acknowledged that young person, "but—why not? None of us are dead, and we have enough to eat. You are so pretty, Diana. Billy thinks you are the prettiest girl he ever saw. He said so at dinner last Sunday."

Diana shrugged her shoulders.

Billy came around the corner of the house as she stood up.

"I must run," she said.

"May I walk home with you?" stumpled the boy. He turned a bright red after his question, conscious of the interested group on the porch.

"No," answered Diana, "I'm not going to trouble you to-day, for I'm going to the village on an errand."

"But, I could take you there," said Billy with thinly veiled entreaty.

"Son," interrupted the fat man on the porch, who was twirling a black cigar around in his mouth, "the lady don't want yuh!"

"Oh, no, Mr. Branders," protested Diana, "but you see, with errands, sometimes men are an embarrassing addition. For all you know, I may stop at the pink shop under the Elks' rooms!"

The Branders all laughed loudly at

this joke which they considered delightfully wicked. The shop happened to bear the label of "Munsey's Corset Shop."

"In my day," said Mrs. Branders, who was rocking violently and fanning herself with a magazine, "we didn't talk of 'em when there was gentlemen around, but times has changed. Now, isn't she pretty!"

Diana, swinging down the long drive, had turned to wave. Billy drew a long breath, sat down, and began to inspect his cigarette case. "How long's she going to be here, Elizabeth?" he inquired in a tone he tried to make casual.

"I don't know," she answered, "but we hope quite a while," and Elizabeth went on to tell of Mr. Alexander Kinkead's mission, his daughter's charm, and of how things had brightened at the Johns' house since Diana's arrival.

"Daddy always comes down to dinner now," she ended, "and before she came sometimes it was weeks that we hardly saw him at all!"

Meanwhile, Diana went hurrying down the road. The air was heavy and felt of rain. She hoped she would reach home before it began to fall. Her pink lawn frock and broad white hat were not meant for showers.

Approaching her, she saw Mary; Mary in a brown corduroy skirt which slunk around her ankles in back and pitched upward in front. A very evidently ready-made shirt waist, having shrunk incredibly with many and hard washings, revealed Mary's wrists, on one of which was a steam burn. She carried a basket, wore a good, durable hat, clutched an umbrella, and beamed widely.

"My dear," she said between short breathing, "I hoped—you'd stay there. No one at home except—Stanley and he's—working."

"Where are you going?" asked Diana, stopping. Why didn't Mary

wear a hair net? Didn't she know her hair streamed around her face in straight, perspiration-wet wisps?

"Town—the butcher. You know how they are—forgot to come. Not that I blame him. His wife had twins. Ethel thought *he* was sick at first. I asked him, and he said, 'Yessum, I was. My wife had twins.' I suppose he was upset! But I couldn't just understand!"

Diana was laughing.

"You're lovely!" she said.

Mary beamed widely. Diana was beginning to take up the family appreciation.

"Well, dear, you'd better hurry," she said. "I think there's a shower coming up."

"Let me go to town for you," said Diana. "I'm sure I could buy a steak or sausage or whatever you want!"

"Sausage in May! Hear the child! No, you run home, dearie. I have an umbrella."

"Why didn't you ride?" called Diana over her shoulder.

"The children wanted to go to the Schuler woods for mandrakes and I hadn't the courage to make them walk. It is so hot, you know! They took the Ayers youngster. If you play the piano, dear, remember the soft pedal. I hate to remind you, but—my goodness, is it three?"

The girl looked at a little gray enamel watch that hung on a beautifully wrought gray enamel and silver chain.

"It is," she answered, and then with a wave, went on.

"She is a good soul!" Diana admitted, and then shrugged her shoulders. In her language, that motion disposed of persons who were only good. Alone for the afternoon, or at least two hours of it—what would she do?

The house, shaded with trees all glorious with years, loomed before her with the question. She would play, not forgetting the soft pedal, and write a

few letters. How lovely the late violets were which grew along the wall! The gate clicked as she opened it and then she went up the gravel path to the door. This was unlocked and the upper half swung wide. She went in, and crossed to the piano alcove, sitting down without taking off her hat. The sweep of the brim was lovely on her.

She was playing a bit of a Russian air when the rain began, gently at first and then with a sweeping fervor. The wind bent the trees, and with their curtain of haze they turned to moaning, writhing ghosts, gray ghosts, turned mad by a scolding sky. It was dark in the small alcove and Diana lit a candle which stood on a bracket near the piano. Then she began a bit of Chopin which she really played, and suddenly, thinking of the man upstairs, she played it loudly, gorgeously, and with all her strength, and she smiled until she heard footsteps hurrying down a stair.

To be right in the middle of work and to have some one break in is about as irritating as to have some one tell you half of a thrilling story and stop suddenly, never to resume. And with interruption, Stanley Johns found that more than often his secret of the moment went, never to come back. Things had been going well for him on the wild afternoon of the rain. His pen slipped across his page unaided, his characters really talked; his scenes became real.

And then, just as he was thrillingly conscious of the reality of his reflection; just as he was turning hot, then cold, with the realization of good work, well done, the piano burst in and broke his mood. He got up.

"Whoever did that—" was all he said through set teeth.

Shaking, angrily conscious of the hold of his rage, he went down the stairs. Elizabeth, whom he had expected to see, was not before the piano.

Instead, he saw Diana, all soft in a soft light, a shadow from the sweeping hat across her eyes, her mouth moist-looking in its deep red, more than lovely. Stanley's anger faded. Rage was wiped from his soul like a small boy's problem from a slate. He stood watching. The child could play, he decided. She looked up, and her hands lay silent on the keys.

"Oh, you——" she whispered.

He laughed shortly as he drew near the piano.

"I came down to slay you," he confided. "Go on. What was that?"

"*'Orientale'*," she answered in a piano voice, that voice which levels to one tone with the player's playing. "I don't know who wrote it, but lovely—right here, listen!"

Stanley drew nearer and leaned on top of the piano, his arms across it. He watched Diana's fingers for a moment and then his eyes went back to her face. She did not look at him as she usually did. Had he been a fool to laugh at her admiration? Just the night before, he had said to Mary: "That child's admiration is rather stifling." But would it be that if he took it and held it as something precious? Good God, she was a lovely thing! He moved suddenly, with an onslaught of emotion, and looked away from her. She was Kinkead's daughter, the daughter of an old friend.

"I've spoken to you twice!" he heard, and looked at Diana. She was laughing at him.

"Don't!" he said brokenly, and turned away to stand by a rain-blotched, leaded window, his hot forehead pressed against it. Diana did a wise thing. She played on.

"You are lonely," she remarked soothingly, after a few bars of something indefinite and vaguely sweet. "I understand. Does that help?"

"Oh, child!" he answered with some-

thing like a groan. The word became a caress.

And then Diana did a cruel thing, a thing that a person of strength would never have done, no matter how strongly a real love prompted the action—never have done, remembering Mary, dumpy, faithful Mary, walking two miles to the town in the storm-laden, heavy heat, and smiling all the way. Diana rose. She went to stand close to Stanley Johns, and she laid a beautifully cared-for, sweetly soft, small hand on his sleeve.

"I understand," she said in a low voice, "and I am here to help you if you need me!"

Stanley was not a strong man. The fabric of his work was built upon emotions. He twisted them and looked at them inside out. They were too near to him, too known to him. Only the failings of his wife had kept him sane. Had she been anything but dumpy, everyday, and casually appealing, he would have lost his genius in a blazing flame. As it was, she had turned the blaze to a furnace fire, just enough to keep him warm and heat his house, and not enough to stifle.

But here, here—Diana's lovely hands, her voice, her soul, poured out in tunes, the beauty of her eyes—he groped for her hands—the touch of her!

"Help me!" he whispered.

Diana answered the pressure of his hands. She herself shook as she felt his trembling, and then—the bang of the opening upper half of the door, the slipped bolt of the lower, and Mary's voice. She was speaking to Elizabeth, whom she had evidently met down the road.

"I couldn't get steak," she was saying, "although I tried at three places. You know, father likes it. Did you get wet, pettie? Sure? I don't want you to keep on wet shoes; you know last time— Why, hello! Did work go well, dear? Diana, I hope you

weren't lonely. Children home? I'm so afraid they got soaked. I got the loveliest head of cabbage. Don't stand that umbrella there, dearie; it'll drip."

Stanley, still breathless, could not speak, but Mary noticed nothing.

Diana sat down before the piano once more and fluttered between tunes. "*Palomma e Notte*," a recent war song, Chaminade, and then a funeral march. Stanley tried not to watch her, and failed. His eyes followed her hungrily and as they did, his soul shrank.

"Ethel isn't back yet?" asked Mary. "Well, I'll have to put the potatoes on. I told her she could go to the dress-maker's. She wants a pink lawn made up like Diana's."

"Good heavens!" said Diana.

"She's a nice girl, and I thought you wouldn't mind," continued Mary. "I suppose she was caught in the rain. Well," Mary rose somewhat stiffly and paddled across the slippery, bare hall floor, down the two steps into the dining room, and out to the kitchen.

There, she put on a long, blue-checked apron and attacked a good number of potatoes. Elizabeth, following, offered in an apprehensive manner to help and was set to arranging the table.

"Two forks, pettie," called Mary. "We're going to have pie. There! Didn't I forget to order candles, and we're almost out! Well, I'll telephone."

Upstairs in his workroom, Stanley K. Johns hid his eyes in shame, shame which was still tangled with the echo of what Diana, with all her soft appeal, had thrust upon him.

"Forty-five," ran through his head, "forty-five!" and then, with a sharp stab, "twenty-two!"

Mary came slowly up the stairs, puffing at every step, and then with ridiculous squeaks tiptoed past the door. Stanley got up and went to the mirror.

Forty-five, but he did not look it. His

hair, perhaps, but his hair was effective. Gray, thick, and well brushed. He had had too many women mention it and eye it with sighs to be unaware of its attraction. He was lean, too. He had not thickened with the years. He looked down at himself. Then he moistened his lips. He would simply have to get a grip on himself! The situation would be impossible. "I am not quite a villain!" he said aloud. And then he thought of Mary. He went to their bedroom laggingly.

Mary was changing her stubby, wet shoes. He sank to a chair and fumbled for cigarettes.

"You've been a good wife," he said, staring at the flare of his match.

"My dear!" protested Mary, "not nearly so good as you deserved! Now, I've often thought—you'll laugh, I know, but I have—that if you'd gotten a girl like Diana when you were young, it would have been better. Of course, she'd have had to be different in some ways, for you do like your socks darned, dear, and buttons on your clothes. You should have seen the rain in town. Rivers of it. I stopped in at the shoemaker's for shelter. He's a German, but he doesn't seem very bad. He has religious pictures and "Don't spit on the floor" pasted up. He talked to me, but I didn't understand much of what he said. However, I think he said I looked like his grandmother."

Stanley was laughing. He got up and put an arm around Mary. Then he kissed her with an emotional display that he had not shown her in years. After he left the room, Mary looked searchingly in the mirror, but she didn't see herself—her slipping hair, her crushed waist, nor her shining, powderless face. A problem seemed to lie before her.

"I wonder what's up?" she said slowly. For she was vastly disturbed by the flavor of her husband's kiss.



## CHAPTER V.

For a week Stanley spoke to Mary quite casually of Diana, as he had before, just to show himself that nothing had changed and that he could speak of her. As for Diana, she dressed her hair more often and wore her prettiest frocks, and began to wake to a trembling consciousness because the eyes of a famous novelist would not meet hers.

They were alone only once, and that was before breakfast, a moment inauspicious for romance; but even that, Diana used.

"I read your poem on the grays of Venice last night," she said, "and afterward I went to kneel by my window in the dark. It—it fitted the mood you left me in."

After this she was silent, for Roger came lumbering in, carrying a sick rabbit, and Wiggy followed with a disgustingly wide-awake look for eighty-three in the morning.

Later in the day Stanley told Mary that the child was "really exquisitely sympathetic." Her loving his poem, her kneeling in the dark and thinking of it—perhaps of him, too—left him like a lover, violent from the first knowledge of being loved. He wanted to shout to all the world of her understanding, her sympathy. He wrote Kinkead a long letter about his daughter. He said that she was well, happy, and had a beautiful mind. He said something about its being like a cool, sweet, water-scented pool with lily thoughts abloom upon it. Then he sheltered his eyes with his hand and gave himself up to dreams.

Below in the garden he heard Diana's voice and got up suddenly. Then he sat down, feeling miserably hot. She was a child and in his care. His kind of reflection defiled her. About the stain that it left on the faithfulness of Mary, he had no thought. There

was a scream and again he got up, this time to hurry to the window.

Diana was below, fluttering about in the shade and sunlight. She wore a straight, soft-looking white frock, loosely belted with a chain of beads, and she looked a picture of happiest Greek youth in the days of their most beautiful living. Billy Branders, the openly adoring, was chasing her with a caterpillar. The idea of his touching Diana set Stanley's teeth on edge.

"Doesn't he see how wonderful the child is?" thought Stanley, looking down on Diana, who had taken refuge behind a rough, weather-greened bench.

"I say, Diana, forgive me and come and talk," entreated Billy.

"About what?" asked Diana cruelly. "I know nothing of carburetors!"

"A—about love!" whispered the boy.

"Pooh!" said Diana and snapped her lovely fingers. Then she sat down and lit a cigarette. Stanley had not known she smoked. He hoped Mary would not see. Mary would not understand. Mary—Mary! He went back to his desk.

"I guess," he said aloud to a little bit of blue and gold and olive green on canvas that pretended to be Analfi, "that I will go on a woods trip. Fishing, perhaps. Try some of the streams near Redington. Did she enjoy the society of that pup? After all, *he* was her age. Forty-five! Forty-five!"

A framed picture of the three children smiled on him from a corner of his desk. Diana's voice from the garden left his palms wet.

"This is madness!" he almost shouted, and then: "Yes, I'll go away. A few days will fix it."

And he went down to Mary.

Mary was steaming with something that was steaming on the stove. Ethel, as was often the case on busy days, had developed a toothache.

"Can't you get more maids?" asked Stanley coolly.

Her working irritated him now as never before. He wanted her to be as comfortable as possible so that that feeling of guilt, at least, would be absent.

"You know how it is," said Mary, stirring aggressively. "It's too near New York. They all go there, and what with the munition plant, although I don't see why they like to work there where they may be blown up at any moment! Only yesterday Ethel told me about a man in New Jersey who was blown to nothing. All they found to send to his mother was a suspender clasp and an elk tooth. She thought it was one of his and they never told her differently which I think was kind, inasmuch as she'd had all the expense of having it set in a brooch. Did you want to tell me something, dear?"

"Think I'll go up in the woods near Redington for a few days. Frankly, work hasn't gone."

"I know, dear," said Mary sympathetically, as she pushed aside her damp, straight, straggling hair from her moist forehead. "That would be a good idea, I believe. You remember, so often you've gone away tired and discouraged and come back—thank Heaven! that's the ice man. I thought he was never coming and I'd planned a mousse for this evening. Goodness, I'm glad to see you, John. Wait a minute and I'll take out the milk. Stanley, turn out the gas, will you, dear? Thank you so much. I hate to trouble you—" and then she vanished in the direction of the pantry.

After a few bangs from that dimly lit spot and the clank of many milk bottles touching as they were crowded against the ice, Mary returned. She smiled radiantly and told Stanley that he had been good to attend to the fire. Then she went to the cupboard and hunted for the oil of cloves.

"I'm going to take this up to Ethel," she said. "Perhaps it will help her."

She started toward the stairs.

"Can't you get some more servants?" asked Stanley in a repressed, too-controlled voice. All of his vague shame he had suddenly hung on the peg which he labeled "Overwork."

Mary sank down on the lowest step. "Goodness knows I'd like to," she admitted. "Don't think this is choice, dear. While I don't mind working for you dear people—I don't, one bit—I will admit I'd like to be lazy occasionally. But they just won't come out here in the country. I've been to the employment offices so often that I'm ashamed to go any more, and it doesn't do any good! Stanley, there's some ink on your cheek—and Mrs. Branders has the same trouble in spite of her lovely rooms for them and their own bathrooms and pink-edged towels labeled 'Maids,' so they won't get mixed, I suppose—"

"Good God, Mary!"

"What is it, dear? Have I annoyed you?"

"Yes—no! I don't know!" He looked at her as she sat on the lowest step, her hair streaming, her face a dull red from the heat of the stove. "I've got to get away!" he said through set teeth, and then vanished.

For a moment after he went Mary sat on the lowest step, feet toed in, back sagging, her skirt rumped and soiled from her work. Her face wore worried lines.

"Well," she thought, "this won't help any, and perhaps a good dinner will fix him up."

She struggled to her feet and went heavily up the stairs toward the suffering Ethel.

Wiggy, who had walked to town with a long manuscript which was to be sent by express, picked Roger up from the doorway of a pool room.

"I won't tell on you this time, young man," he said, "but I will the next."

"All the fellahs go," said Roger sullenly.

"They aren't your sort."

"I'm not a snob!"

"I'm not, either," said Wiggy, peering after a grain-loaded wagon, which to his nearsighted eyes had seemed a very animated haystack. "But those fellows don't think, and they're not the sort who will make pleasure for you, nor to whom you will give pleasure. They work all day in the mills and then go to see a picture show if Theda Bara's on the bill. You don't swear and they don't read. What do you want to go there for? You wouldn't want to hold hands with an Eskimo maid! And besides, your mother doesn't like your going there."

"Mother's old-fashioned. Diana wouldn't care."

Wiggy turned and looked closely at his companion.

"I'll grant you," he said, "that Miss Diana wouldn't care."

"Don't you like her?" asked Roger with sudden heat.

"If I didn't, I wouldn't tell another chap so," said Wiggy, folding the express receipt with utter absorption. Roger grew pink.

"Billy Branders' gone," he said hurriedly, "absolutely gone! Crazy about her! Says he'll never marry any one else and that she'll have him yet. Simply insane about her!"

"Are you the fellow who said love made you sick, last March?" asked Wiggy.

"I've grown," said Roger swelling. "I was only a child then. I realize it now. Diana made me see things."

"Um——" grunted Wiggy.

"I wish mother would get another maid," said Roger, after a few feet of silent walking. "It looks so silly for her to jump up and help Ethel!"

"And it must be tiring," said Wiggy in a too-crisp voice.

"Why, yes," said Roger, "I suppose it

must." His eyes changed under the new viewpoint. "I never thought of that," he acknowledged, naively.

Wiggy looked with great effort into a field and suggested their going in to sit down.

"I want to talk to you," he said. "There's a haystack there, isn't there? I want to say something to you in entire confidence."

They walked across the uneven field and settled against the stack of hay, which was moldy and smelled dismally old. Wiggy drew forth a long-stemmed pipe, loaded and lighted it, and then began.

"Miss Diana's nice, of course," he began, studying his pipe, "but do you know that your mother's wonderful? Sometimes I think great men like your father see too many visions to see things that stand at hand. And—I think you children will have to make up to your mother what she lacks."

"Mother doesn't lack anything, and she wouldn't know it if she did," answered Roger resentfully and with some wisdom.

"Some day she may," said Wiggy, applying a match to his stubborn pipe. "And now—you can go blab on me to your father and lose me my job, or take my advice and try to see things that aren't on the surface, and I think that if you do, some day you'll thank me."

Roger was silent.

"I've taken a great liberty," said Wiggy, "that I know; but I felt as if it ought to be taken!" He waved his hot match to and fro as he ceased speaking, and stared in the direction of some dull, blue, hazy hills that lay far to the east. "You know," he went on, "women do have such darned hard times! They have to put up with their husbands and then babies, and I guess, for reason, one isn't much better than the other; and they sew buttons on and things and—well, just sometimes, it must be damnable!"

"I won't tell," said Rôger, getting up, "but I don't know what you mean."

"I hope I'm a hysterical old maid," said Wiggy, brushing the stubble from his trousers, "and that you never will."

And then they went marching home. Wiggy became newly and charmingly good fun. Roger began to wonder if, after all, he wasn't better than he seemed. And when, in front of the house, they met and joined a large party playing tag, Wiggy seemed an entirely different being from the one of thick glasses and the clicking typewriter.

The odor of hot gingerbread greeted Roger as he was being chased around the house by Beatrice, and he begged off and went in the kitchen. His mother, with strangely red eyes, stood by a table. She was beating eggs in a big blue bowl.

"I smelled——" began Roger, and then his tone changed. "Why, mum-sie," he said, "you've been crying!"

Mary smiled in a shamefaced way, and the effort resulted in a dismal thaw of her features.

"I hoped it wouldn't show," she said. "I'm ashamed! I haven't for years because it worries your father; but today everything went hard, and then Ethel got a toothache, and my gingerbread fell, and then I dropped a bottle of milk in the pantry and I had to mop it up, and then your—your father thinks I don't get maids because I don't want them!" She stopped suddenly, choking. "I don't know what is wrong with me!" she ended.

Something very much older than seventeen slipped into the soul of Roger. It left him entirely ashamed.

"My gosh, we've been hogs!" he said loudly. He put his arm around the new mother he had met and, in spite of his emotion-shy years, would have kissed her, but she pushed him aside, evading his caress flutteringly.

"Don't—darling boy," she whispered unsteadily. "I—I'll cry again. When

a woman is almost there and some one she loves kisses her, she lets out and does it!"

Roger left the kitchen and searched for Elizabeth. When he found her he sent her around to help his mother. Then he, in passing Wiggy, made a gruff acknowledgment.

"Wiggy," he said, "you're a darned good fellow!"

He went up to his room. There he sat down, tilted his chair, and looked at a photograph of his father—the last of many. There was none of Mary in his room. She hadn't had her picture taken since her marriage.

The gong rang and seventeen-year-old reflection absolutely ceased. Roger got up, bounded down the stairs, and ran to the dining room. There Mary, as usual, was moving around.

"He's going away for a few days," she was saying to Diana. "He really needs the rest!"

#### CHAPTER VI.

A few days in the woods lengthened to a week and then to two of them. Stanley tramped down the mountain once to telegraph to Mary that he was well. She replied with an extravagantly long wire in which she asked about the weight of his underwear and told him that Roger had mumps.

But for the most part, Stanley forgot home and tried to forget Diana, and fished, lived outdoors, and felt the peace that green walls of leaves and a ceiling of far-away, sinking blue gives to even the most unevenly balanced nerves. A lumberman cooked for him rough food, but enough, and his trappings seasoned it. The silences and little scuffles of wood lives became enough company; the silences his own.

On the night before his return home, he sat on the edge of his bunk and made vows. Mary, with distance, took somewhat her proper shape; Diana became a child, after all, and no one

to worry about. Forty-five! Good heavens! he was through with the heat of youth! He looked back with something like a shudder to his Paris days, where he had lied to himself, when his will power sank to the level of his appetites, by talking loudly of the necessity of a writer knowing life. Kinkead had not agreed with him.

"You know mud when you see it, man," he had said, waving his meerschau in a wide arc. "You do not have to lie in it and roll in it to describe a filthy puddle in the middle of the highway. And it's apt to cover your eyes, and after a while you'll be saying there isn't any blue in the sky, and that there aren't any sailing birds. I've seen the thing happen!"

Then Kinkead had stuffed his pipe so full that, with the touch of a match, the tobacco had sprung up and fluttered in sparks to the floor. He had puffed on it fiercely.

"You don't know what it is to love!" Stanley had said, going to a window which looked down on a small crowded street. The memory of the street had never left him. A restaurant below brought gayly dressed people, and the curb was always lively with folk who chattered incessantly as they drank their demi-tasse or their wines.

"Love?" Kinkead had said with a sneer.

The men had parted for a few months, shortly after that, and when they next met Kinkead was wild with the happiness of his first thaw and the first wedded months, and Stanley had worn himself to weakness and shame and was repentant and very good. Kinkead's wife was a strange one for the hard Scotchman. She had a few drops of Italian blood in her veins and they showed markedly. She was exquisitely beautiful in a cool way, and she loved her husband with a fervor which seemed strange in her. Stanley saw in her all the cruelty of the

languorous south. In spirit he felt her arouse the passions of men and then go fluttering off with a laugh, a phantom rose between her teeth. But Kinkead saw only a woman who needed his protection; and she turned to him for it with a trust very like a child's. Much later Kinkead told Stanley a story about her.

Then, after a lull, there was a baby and Kinkead's wife died. The baby was called Diana.

Stanley, sitting on the edge of the bunk, recalled it all, the very weather and the colors of the skies. He remembered hearing the news of the death and his hurrying to Como, where she had been sick. Kinkead, silent, hard, but with the fires of agonies shining behind his eyes, had stood looking down at a tiny bit of a thing in a wicker basket, when Stanley entered the room.

After a talk of a half hour, Stanley had become very much worried. Kinkead was hard hit.

"You won't do anything—desperate?" inquired Stanley with a stupidity which came from flaring, anxiety-torn nerves.

"A man takes his medicine," answered Kinkead sharply. "He does not spit it out to stain the human carpet simply because it turns bitter in his mouth!"

And then, for a few months the two had been very close. Stanley, a better man, Kinkead, a softer one. After that, Stanley returned to the States, met Mary, and the two old friends drifted apart. Then one letter a year faded to none, and the intercourse was closed until Kinkead needed a temporary home for his lovely daughter.

"Supper!" called the lumberman. Stanley got up from the edge of his bunk. Kinkead and memories faded. Outside, on a roughly built porch stood a table. The smell of fried trout flavored the air deliciously and the sound of a little waterfall that was not

far away from the cabin made any other music on earth a faulty thing of discord.

"This is good!" said Stanley.

Strangely, it seemed to him, Mary's smile echoed in his memory sight; and it seemed to fit the woods, the smell of good food, and the little tinkle of a shimmering brook.

Diana's time had hung heavily. Her arms were an open vase for romance and they were empty. Dreams, girl-dreams, had become insufficient. Her mind was filled with a long, lean man with gray hair and to her, a charmingly uncertain temperament.

Absurd newisms echoed in her consciousness at queer times, unIntroduced, unsought. That—the greatest confession that the question they answered was an integral part of her consciousness. She remembered a friend of her boarding-school days who had been divorced after two years of marriage. "We were not happy," said the young woman who cultivated pastel tones and the very new verse and their makers, "and is not the greater sin the living a lie?" Diana nodded. Of course, it was. It was only the stodgy who stayed married when they didn't feel like it.

"Individual fulfillment," went on the friend, "is the only aim, or should be. The other is a sin against the soul; and one's soul should be the first thought, a thing to be carefully guarded, beautifully and tenderly treated." Diana realized all this also.

Then, with the new patter, she went on for herself. Should two people who loved each other be held apart by an existing bond which was breakable? Should not one be sacrificed to make the happiness of two? It all sounded reasonable. What a wife she could be for a creator! Stimulating, helpful, and loving! Of course, Mary probably loved Mr. Johns in a purely animal way; but, should some one come into

his life who would answer his larger needs, would she not be large enough to stand aside?

After all, what was life but giving, and if the giving proved to be losing, how great the gift! He must feel the lacks, but thank God! people were growing large enough to see the wisdom of divorce! Diana wondered when he would be home. Probably Mary did love him, but she was incapable of any real depth of feeling. And Diana got up and went from the house, through the gate that led to the orchard, and there raised her arms to the blackened boughs and green, fresh leaves.

"I am mad about him!" she whispered.

It was all beautifully dramatic.

Roger, having mumps, turned Diana loose rather cruelly on the Branders. Billy, by reason of first passion, about which experience had reared no sheltering walls, became a thing to play with. Diana did not plan to do it, but the child was interesting! Her hand would lie on his coat sleeve casually as they stepped over a rough spot in the path and then Diana's eyes would become interesting as the boy turned white and walked stiffly, looking ahead, while he held in check his quick breathing until his lungs ached.

And then one evening, after Diana had been to town and was walking slowly homeward, hoping that Mary would have a peach mousse for a dinner finish, she heard a step behind her and a call.

"Huntress!" said his voice and she turned.

Stanley came hurrying up, browned, laughing, leaner than ever. He was gay and delightfully light in thought. His eyes met hers without consciousness.

"How are the mumps?" he asked. "And Mary? Ethel's responsive tooth? What a pretty hat! Tell me, Diana, did they wear those on Olympus? And did



you really lug bucks home? I can't believe it. Ever tell you about the first time I saw you?"

Diana shook her head.

What had the woods done to him?"

"You were in a clothes basket and howling unmercifully. I suggested to your dad that you be sent to the laundry unmarked so that they'd forget to return you, but he thought differently. Your father's a fine man, Diana. I thought of him a lot up there in the woods."

Diana shivered. This—this, after all her hopes! And she wanted to give to him, to help him, to be to him all that

"Not well," he said, "but some time I'll tell you all I remember of her. You want me to?" his voice had grown tender.

"Oh, yes!" said Diana, "but not now."



"Hello," grunted Roger, and sat down, watching—watching. Stanley grew red and a rage overtook him. Did that young pup think he could discipline his father?

he lacked in the silly, dumpy Mary. Diana, aware of a silence which her temperament was not large enough to fill, spoke and in accident struck a good note. From the souring of her modern, morbid dreams, her voice had grown unsteady.

"Did—did you know my mother?" she faltered.

Stanley nodded.

"No, not now," echoed Stanley, and then as they neared the Johns' grounds: "Juggan mowed the lawn? Looks nice. Roses in bloom. Well, where's Mary?" He hurried up the path and the door opened. Mary, hot with helping to cook a good dinner, her hair streaming and frock stained with a refractory jar of strawberries, opened her arms widely.

"My dear boy!" she said softly.

Stanley drew a deep sigh and laid his cheek against her shoulder. He did not realize it, but that spot was his real and only home.

#### CHAPTER VII.

In the following two weeks, Mary began to understand, and June, that she had always so loved, became a mockery. The roses which covered the arbor back of the house nodded, smirked, and sneered at her. They seemed too brilliant in their youth and their fragrance, something that was not for her years, but for the youth she had really never had. Diana, against the mass of pink, was a picture; Mary, a caricature.

Diana picked them and put a few with a water lily from the Branders' pond, some larkspur, and a sprig of heliotrope, in a flat, dull-green bowl. Mary had thought all flowers were built to be vased as they grew, apart; but Stanley had looked at the center of the dining table and breathed: "Lovely!" and then softly to Diana: "You, child?"

And then Mary had gone to the kitchen and made a chicken gravy with heat in her heart. She stirred feverishly as she thought of all the pain of all the years, borne for the man who had forgotten her. True, he had always forgotten her, but he had never remembered, for more than a short space, any one else. And if Diana would only make her bed instead of arranging flowers—

Things slipped from the realm of atmosphere one afternoon when the head of a well-known picture company came from New York to talk to Mr. Johns about the filming of his last novel.

Mary, who took care of all such tedious affairs, looked over the contract carefully, made a change or two—greatly to the amazement of the gentleman, who had at first supposed he was interviewing the cook—and then went

in search of Stanley. His signature was necessary and his advice on a point or two.

She called from the back door and then resorted to "the bell," a Swiss cowbell which hung by the back door and was used to call the children to meals. No one answered and Mary went toward the barn. Stanley had to be found. She would hitch up Jane Eyre, the taupe donkey, and go hunting for him. He had been warned of the approaching visit; the man could not be sent away. As she went down the drive, an incongruous figure in the two-wheeled cart, she thought wearily that probably Diana was with him, but at that point it was only a vague hurt, a hurt such as she had had a thousand times before and from the selfsame reason. She knew that Stanley was interested in Diana—a blind man could have seen that—and she knew that he had suddenly ceased speaking of "the child." Also, his affections toward her herself had been intense, even while they held an absent quality. Nothing so burns the soul of a woman as to have a man dream upon her lips the kisses of another, and unless she is an utter fool she knows those that belong to her from those that don't. Kisses have their flavor and they know their owners.

Mary jogged along, Jane lagged, and Mary slapped the reins sharply. She remembered that some one had spoken of water lilies at lunch. Probably they were at the Branders' pool. She'd try that first. If she'd only thought, she'd have taken the waiting gentleman a glass of iced tea and some cake. She wished she had. A cloudless sky and thrushes singing in the roadside bushes made Mary feel the weight of her vague hurt less. She was probably an imaginative old woman and, of course, Stanley liked beauty and she liked him to, but she hoped he didn't know that the child smoked. She sighed. They'd been away from the

real world a long, long time. Jane lagged again and even bowed her head to eat a piece of grass that had straggled from the roadside.

At the turn in the road Mary drew rein and tied Jane and then slowly went down a little path. White-barked saplings and black-green firs guarded the lake. Only its very edges were bare. The path was lovely; cool, damp, and full of the pungent odor of crushed evergreen needles which made the way a softly gliding one. At the opening, Mary paused and then turned to the right and went around the big rock. Diana and Stanley stood before her, not twenty feet distant. Stanley had Diana's hands held tightly in his and high, pressed against his chest. Mary could see his lips move, and although she could not hear what he said, she could judge for she could see the starlit, passionately young eyes of Diana. Breathless, she turned and slunk around the rock.

"What shall I do?" she moaned, her hands held against her temples. The man was waiting. Stanley must come, and they must not know she knew! So, bravely she drew a breath and started a tune, the only one she ever essayed to sing, and the one she had crooned to Stanley's children to keep them quiet when he wanted quiet. It was "Sweet and Low" and it was characteristic of Mary that she saw nothing humorous in bellowing this at the top of her lungs as she again came down the path.

Two rather rudely awakened people, who showed signs of drinking of forbidden wine, greeted her with too much cordiality. Mary told her story and then went back up the path. Stanley was upset.

"Oh, she didn't see!" whispered Diana contemptuously. "She wouldn't, you know!" Stanley hated Diana for that moment and ran, slipping on the pine needles, up the path after Mary. He put an arm around her.

"Tired, old girl?" he asked, too jovially.

For the first time in her life, Mary drew away.

"My head aches," she explained after a moment of astounded silence.

"You shouldn't have come out," said Stanley. He wondered whether she had seen? But Gad! what could he do? Here was the thing that had come to him after a lifetime of waiting.

First had come the afternoon when he had told Diana what he remembered of her mother. Diana had been sweetly brave, and then suddenly she had turned away, moist-eyed. This had stirred Stanley incredibly. He had not felt such a riot of emotion in years. He had forgotten he could feel so much so completely. Her white neck, kissed by curling hair, fascinated him and made him feel a devil.

He was afraid to trust himself to comfort her, but without volition his hand went out. He touched her shoulder, then drew away sharply, biting his lips. Diana turned, caught his hand between both of hers, and whispered:

"Am I like her at all? Oh, that is silly of me! You say she was lovely."

"And you are," whispered Stanley, "and you are growing more so to me every day!"

Diana had dropped his hand after that, but he had to touch her, so he laid his hand on her lovely hair. Diana looked up at him. Her eyes were the most wonderful part of her beautiful shell and she knew it.

"It has meant everything to be in the same house with you!" she breathed.

After that had come accidental meetings, which, although unspoken of, did not happen accidentally. Diana loved the orchard. Stanley, neglecting his work, which began to seem a thing of so much paper and so much ink, took to strolling there, too, and on finding Diana he would say, breathless: "You—child!"

And she showed him frankly what his coming meant to her and shook from him the last tattered and stained remnant of a thing called honor. The meetings were like a million others. They began by cloaking themselves in a gauze which was thought of by the man as "Intellectual stimulus." Diana, from modernism, more brutal in her badness, saw what the chiffon covered.

"He's beginning to want me," she said to herself, "and some day he'll tell me so!"

Give one child who has been taught by a set of ultramodern associates that marriage is an ancient custom which is well for the lower classes and for the cow-minded, but after all, rather an absurd thing to take too seriously—give her beauty, a pretty voice, a man whose vision is opaqued by flattery and whose emotions have long lain dormant, and she will stir up hell.

They began, those two, to talk the most asinine patter, jargon about the stifling of rule to those who think; about the necessity of law, but the greater and more noble necessity of breaking law; about the hampering of custom, and finally, of course, about love. That had to come. It was as inevitable as a thirst when a man with a thirst passes swinging doors.

They would sit on the soft grass of the orchard, below trees made by a thing called God, and defile the atmosphere with their rantings, which were, for the most part, those belonging to nineteen years, that terrible age which reforms the world, does away with crude restrictions, and builds all things to fit a giant soul, forgetting that the souls of little men are very little, too.

"The restrictions," said Diana one afternoon while Stanley lay at her feet in the orchard, "are for the people. The rules are for the masses, not for those who think."

"No," said Stanley, laying a hand on her skirt. How beautiful she was!

Diana picked a purple-pink clover and pulled it absently to pieces.

"It loves meeting death at those sweet hands!" whispered the man who lay looking at her.

Diana smiled.

"Now if we built a world——" she began.

*Oh, danger!*

Again:

"Has any one the right to deny himself that which will promote soul growth?" Diana asked.

That day they were on the Branders' lake, floating idly. A poor showing of lilies, losing their blood in the bottom of the boat, revealed the excuse for the visit.

"To me, the divine right is the asked question answered; the seeking man the question, his true mate, married or unmarried, the answer." It was all as new as the Sphinx—the selfish fight for individual fulfillment, a throwback to that theology which made a certain character in "Pilgrim's Progress" push anything, any one from his path, his way, which led to what he wanted. Diana had an idea that all this thought had come from a certain spot in New York where people wore their hair at six-inch length and dreamed that they originated every reason for moral slump, called by them, "the modern way of viewing things."

As for Stanley, he was past hope. Mary simply faded when she wasn't before him; and the children, whom he never thought of except as nuisances, became a horrible reminder of his temporizing with dreams.

There seemed no place in "the new" for children. They were evidently rather restricted, which would seem to some a somewhat baffling paradox in those who spoke loudly of giving every one his chance, and dipping out in large spoonfuls freedom, freedom, and more freedom!

And then, one night when the moon

shone, the soul faded and the material triumphed. Diana, walking with Stanley along a tiny lane that turned down to the Juggan farm, slipped and bumped against his arm. He steadied her, but lost what was left of his moral balance as he did so.

Suddenly he found his arms grinding her close, his mouth pressed against hers, and he was muttering insane, broken-voiced endearments as he held her close and closer with his maddened passion strength. And then suddenly, weak as water, he stood away from her, but Diana, the woman, less easily aroused, pressed against him once more.

"Dear," she whispered, "most dear—love me! Love me! I am yours—yours!"

Her voice broke, and again Stanley put his arms around her. He could not see her, his seething senses blinded him, each throb of his pulses making him forget more completely the world—even Diana. His passion was always stronger than the individual that inspired it.

Away on the main road, some one whistled a lilting tune. It was Roger, who was going to a near-by farm and carrying a pail for berries. Mary wanted strawberries and good ones. She was going to put them up the next day, for Stanley liked them.

Stanley slept that night, after making a lofty resolve "never to touch the child again." Diana did not sleep. Mary slept because, whatever pains she felt, the physical habits were stronger with her than mental unrests.

Down in the orchard the trees, all silvered with moonshine, looked like lovely ghosts of their daytime selves. And, if they thought, perhaps they were glad that they were not little, human men, but were anchored firmly in one spot, knowing, with serene and peaceful strength, the spot that was their home.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Somehow Mary had gotten through the summer, and the season had come which meant to her heavy underwear. Frost had wilted the summer flowers, but the stiffer, hardier ones gleamed their reds and yellows triumphantly over their dying companions. Pumpkins in a near field blazed, and apples on the kitchen window sills made a cheering note. Stanley had forbidden the disturbing of a basket of them which had scattered across the gray stone floor of the arbor, and when Diana, looking at them, had said, her voice low, "too lovely!" Mary had felt more than ever alone. Her sense of beauty was not of their pattern. Scattered apples were to her only "messy."

This afternoon she was in the low attic, hunting winter things. Roger would have to have new union suits; Stanley's pajamas were worn. She wondered where Diana and Stanley were! Thank goodness the girls' underthings were all right for another year. She shook out a muffler, and the air, dusty from the attic and sharp from outdoors, creeping in around loosened windows, grew full of the odor of camphor. She put the muffler around her pudgy shoulders and again leaned over the trunk. Long leggings came out. Too early for those and there was no use taking them down. There was never enough room for things, anyway. Would Diana stay on for the winter?

Dimly, from the direction of the attic stair, came the sound of a piano—Diana playing. Mary sat down on a trunk. Her hands, red from cold, covered her eyes.

"God!" she whimpered, "what'll I do? He really needs me to put the buttons on!"

The piano ceased and the silence held agony for Mary. She wondered, with a rising of hot rage, what was filling that quiet time. Then her eyes flooded.

"If it wasn't for the children——" she murmured.

Downstairs, Diana's hands had ceased their moving. Stanley, who had been standing by the piano watching her unhappily, covered them with his, but his movement was feeble in its passion. Diana demanded much and he was forty-five. Her constant energy pulled on him. At least, Mary had never, even in the first love-soaked days, called him "Beloved" before breakfast!

Stanley was a devil before breakfast. He knew it and Mary knew it, from unhappy experience; and his coffee was ready for him when he awoke and no speech came before it. And then, the last time Diana and Stanley had been safely alone for any time she had interrupted his kisses by saying:

"We must be brave—we must wait, but we will win!"

Stanley gulped. It plumped him to earth with violent suddenness.

"My hands are tied," he whispered. Mary loomed before him, large and trusting. She made his arms slacken about Diana.

"Isn't she large enough to suffer for you?" Diana asked.

Stanley paced to and fro.

"I have three children," he said.

Oh, the terrible energy of the young! Must they be forever doing—doing!

"I have money of my own," said Diana, "enough for us both, and with a decent alimony——"

For a second Stanley saw Diana as she was and he turned away, but only for a second. Then Diana drew near, put an arm around his neck, and he forgot.

"Anything," he whispered, trembling, "anything you say! Oh, God! *Child!*"

Diana smiled above his head. His hot face was pressed against her throat. She saw herself the wife of a famous novelist. She saw the afternoons when she would be hostess to the great. She

was banal enough to plant a samovar in the middle of her dreams and to picture a good number of the great with long, flowing white whiskers.

"What have you been writing lately?" she asked softly.

"What?" he asked thickly. There was no quick-action thought for him when she touched him. Everything blurred, dimmed, became secondary to the poundings of his blood.

"What have you been writing?" she repeated a little sharply.

"Writing?" he echoed stupidly, and then, "Oh, I haven't written at all! I can't with you—the thought of you—tormenting—God!" he gasped, and stopped.

"But I want you to!" she complained, and he had tried. That afternoon of Mary's attic expedition and Diana's playing had begun the acknowledgment of his fear. *He could not write!* Diana sapped his strength, his thoughts. A little maudlin verse, by far the worst that he had ever done, lay on his desk when the music from her fingers stole up to him. He thrilled to it and then swept his hands impatiently across his desk.

"*That,*" he said with a groan, "is it!" If he were strong enough to fight it out, to leave Mary and the children, what would come? Would it come back? Probably as he grew used to Diana—but how she would resent the cooling! How she would fight the inevitable change! Her tears would make a marker for every loss of fervor. She spoke of companionship, but did they have it? He tried to reason, but reason stood well away. It could not leap the wall that Diana's body made around him.

He got up. Music—music—— *She* was at the piano. He almost fell down the stairs in his haste.

"I was afraid you'd go——" he gasped.

He caught her hands and pressed



them to his eyes, then his lips, his hand on her shoulder. She was so soft—so soft—

"What have you written?" asked Diana.

"Written?" he echoed stupidly. "I—I couldn't write. Beloved, I want——" He stopped and drew away sharply.

Roger came lumbering in. He was dusty from contact with the autumn woods.

"Hello," he grunted, and sat down, watching—watching.

Stanley grew red and a rage, almost insane in its intensity, overtook him. Did that young pup think he could discipline his *father*? Fear shook him. Did the boy notice?

All the loftiness he had first felt, all the "spiritual contact" he had first let dim him to his actions, went. What he and Diana felt was a thing to sneak about, to cover; a thing for dark nights and back doors. Diana was right. If it went on, it would have to go on fought out openly, done by law.

"Where's mother?" asked Roger.

"I don't know," said Stanley.

Diana looked at him expressively and raised her shoulders. Roger was not a favorite with her.

"Been over to the Branders'," said Roger.

No one answered.

Roger picked up a book. He'd stick it out, he decided. There was a silence of ten minutes, while Diana, openly impatient, banged out Russian airs with scant sympathy for strings, and then Mary came down the stairs. Her nose was red and her cheeks white from the cold, and her eyes looked as if she'd been crying. She spoke hurriedly. She was too honest to be a good actress, and all the perturbation she felt echoed in her tone.

"I've been in the attic," she announced breathlessly, "hunting winter things. It is turning colder, isn't it?"

And"—here she faltered—"what have you done all afternoon?"

"Music," replied Diana, and almost at the same moment, "Work," from Stanley. Roger laid down his book and looked at them.

"Well," said Mary, dumping the wraps on a bench, "I'm going to stir up a pudding. Ethel's a good girl, but she can't cook. Roger, did you pay the butter man? I'm glad you did, dear. With all his children, I like to be prompt—always so many demands. I thought I heard the bell an hour or so ago."

"Parcel post," answered Beatrice, who came in eating a sandwich concocted of bread and mixed cocoa and sugar.

"You'll spoil your appetite, dearie, it's so near dinner time," said Mary, absently looking at the sandwich, and then: "Was it a large package? I do hope it's the pajamas I ordered for you, last week, Stanley—a pink and blue set. Yours have washed so thin. You know, the laundry—— You dropped some crumbs, pettie. That's mother's dear girl. Roger, you'd better change your clothes before dinner. Where's Elizabeth?"

"The Branders'," answered Roger, "cheering the doleful Billy. You certainly treated him like dirt, Diana."

"If you please, Roger!" broke in Stanley sharply. As if she would have anything to do with that young cub! Diana merely shrugged her shoulders. Roger got up and wandered toward the stairs. On the first, low-set landing, he paused. "I think Bill thought," he remarked casually, "that if he kissed a girl and she let him, that she was going to marry him! He's a slow gink!"

Diana changed color, but her head bent above the piano keys and saved her from detection. Roger wandered up the stairway in the horrified silence and Diana, again her usual cool, composed self, looked up.

"What can the child mean?" she asked gently. "Do you suppose little Billy Branders is having a good time with him? Perhaps he thinks that sort of thing's a joke. They are rather strange people, you know."

"He shall apologize!" said Stanley thickly. He had had a shock, the worst sort. For, in that moment when he had believed Roger, his soul had soared with a vast relief, a relief that had greatly overshadowed hurt.

"I'll speak to him," said Mary, "but I'm sure, dear, that he didn't mean anything. You know Roger's jokes, and he's just a boy! No, Beatrice, not to-night, dearie. If you crush it, you won't have anything to wear Sunday. What is it, Stanley? Dinner? Why, in about a half hour, I think. The pudding won't take long to do. Come out with mother, dearie. I'd like you to set the table. Ethel's been working so hard canning pears to-day that I don't like——" Her voice trailed off as she went and then ceased with the little snap of a closing door. The smell of moth balls from the winter things filled the hall.

"Moth balls and counting wash!" said Diana with a shudder. "I couldn't!"

"Some one has to," said Stanley, looking down at a letter he was absently creasing.

"But if you don't," said Diana, "some one else will."

"Quite true," agreed Stanley. His voice was crisp and he was not looking at Diana. She turned from the piano, silent, her hands idly lying in her lap, soft, pink, palms up, fingers gently curling.

"But you don't advocate anything so stupid as submerging one's personality in such trifling pursuits?" she queried. "Things that a servant—a child could do?"

Stanley didn't answer. Everything rasped. Every word she said grated.

Even her physical appeal could not smooth the moment.

"They're beginning to see," he said, with a look toward the dining-room door. "It's damnable! I feel—filthy! Child, why did you *let* me?" But what he meant, and what he knew he meant, was: "Why did you *make* me?"

Diana looked at him and, blinded by her own egoism, was saved from pain.

"How could I help letting you?" she asked. "It was meant—planned, for you are you and I am I!" She held out a small hand. He hesitated, then took it. The touch gave him courage and something for which to fight.

"You're right," he said, moistening his parted lips, "but when you don't touch me—I forget!"

The door into the dining room opened.

"Mother says dinner's on," announced Beatrice, "and will some one please bring her shawl because she feels a little cold, and look down the road to see whether Elizabeth is coming, and if not whether papa doesn't think Roger ought to go for her?" The child paused after that, gasping. "We're going to have the kind of potatoes you like, daddy," she added, "stuffed baked ones; and mother burned her hand. Oh, Elizabeth *is* coming. I'm glad, for mother was worried."

Going upstairs that night Mary heard angry voices, Roger's and her husband's. She sighed. She had hoped that Roger's unfortunate speech would pass by without further notice. How quick he was to defend Diana! She closed her lips tightly and stopped on the last step. She was suddenly dizzy. She had been hot and cold in turn ever since she came down from the winter-chilled attic. She paused as she reached Roger's door, thought about going in, and passed by. She could not help and she might let him see that she knew everything. He must, her wounded pride decided,

never know that. A nervous chill shook her and then came one of physical origin.

"If I weren't so tired," she thought, "I'd go back and make myself some ginger tea, but I suppose I'll be all right when I get to bed."

She scratched a match, fumbled for the gas jet, turned it on, and the light flared. Then she stood shaking for a few moments before she had courage to take off her outer things. The air in the room seemed very cold. "I declare," she murmured, "the furnace must be down. I do hope Juggans didn't forget it!"

In Roger's room two angry individuals faced each other.

"I will not apologize," said Roger, "nor will I tell what I meant," and with that he was silent.

Stanley raged. Was the guest in their house, a child left in his care—he faltered and then went on hurriedly—to be insulted, without his interference?

"Her father was my friend," said Stanley dramatically.

Roger looked at him steadily.

"Is—is the fruit of my discipline this?" spluttered Stanley. His son's look had left him shaken, ashamed, raging, and quite unable to face a thing as accusing as silence.

"Discipline?" said Roger with a sneer. "Discipline? When did I ever get that—or any of us children—from you? Mother made this family. I'll bet you didn't want us!"

Stanley jumped. He was sure that at seventeen he had not understood things of that sort.

"And," continued his son, "I'd be willing to bet my year's allowance that you made more fuss over it than she did!"

"Whom does your year's allowance come from?" asked Stanley quickly.

"Mother," answered his son. "She makes you work; she paves the way.

She has saved you always. She's the power, and without her your engine wouldn't go! When I was tiny, it was mother who cuddled, spanked, or kept me quiet—quiet so you could work. If you'd had a demanding wife——" Roger laughed at the idea and then again said, "I won't apologize and I won't explain!"

"This is not the end of this, young man," said Stanley who was badly shaken. He stood near the door, hand on the knob.

"I'd leave this house," said Roger, "I'd leave it and you forever, if it weren't for mother! You——" He stopped, almost crying.

Stanley opened the door and stepped without.

What a devilish, damnable thing life could be! How tangled and miserable and gloomy! How could he fight it out? He turned to his study. There, he sat down before his desk and saw that his inkwell was empty. All his rage fastened, as human rages do, on the little thing gone wrong. He set his teeth and hurried to Mary's room.

"Do you know," he said from the doorway, "that my inkwell's empty?" His voice rose. "I go to my study," he went on, "ready to write; sit down, feeling to my finger tips my subject, and then——" He stopped. From the bed came a groan. A sound that Stanley K. Johns had never before heard from his wife. His anger faded into fear, horrible, sickening, cold fear. He hurried to the bed and lit a candle. Mary, eyes glazed with pain, stared up at him.

"So sorry to bother," she gasped between quick breathing, "but I guess I'd—better—have some ginger—tea. Seem to have—a chill and the—pain—I——" Her voice ceased suddenly. The match with which Stanley had lit the candle and which he had forgotten to put out burned itself to death against his fingers.

"I'll get a doctor," he said after a sharp breath. "Roger," he called, "come here quickly!"

### CHAPTER IX.

Stanley had gone to Roger's room because he was ashamed to be afraid of his son, but the visit had not restored his self-respect. He had left the room in the greatest rage of his life, then had fastened that rage on an empty inkwell; and then had come Mary's acknowledging herself ill. She had never done that before, nor moaned.

Stanley remembered how, when Mary had known of the probable near arrival of Roger, she had said: "You'd better—go now, dear. I may not—be quite myself, and—it might upset you!" and then she had smiled at him through very white, tight-drawn lips.

And now Mary had pleurisy and pneumonia and the house stood on tip-toe and held its breath. Beatrice, a child who was unhappily given to easy tears, made the place dismal with her sniffings. Elizabeth, too suddenly the head of things, ordered meals that reduced Ethel to despair and the family to indigestion, Stanley gritting his teeth and Diana raising her beautifully arched eyebrows. When the wheels of the house creaked, Diana was tried. It was like a badly fitting frock, inexcusable and unbearable!

It was Monday evening and the family were halfway through a more than terrible meal. A sad soup, which had evidently been built about a pork chop, had been displaced by stringy beef and depressed baked potatoes which had gotten ready before the party and had lost their first enthusiasm. An array of unsuitable and unseasoned vegetables surrounded these things.

The day nurse, who was frightened by her proximity to Stanley K. Johns, kept her eyes on her plate and devoted

herself entirely to a thorough chewing of her food. Stanley, watching her solemn mastication, felt the first approach of humor well up in him that he had known for days.

"You Fletcherize?" he inquired pleasantly.

The nurse jumped, raised her eyes, muttered, "Yes," and went back to original position. Beatrice attacked her beef and then began to cry.

"If mamma dies," she wailed, "I will, too! We haven't had a decent thing to eat for days! And—and Ethel's so cross!"

She sniffed and Stanley pushed aside his plate.

"Stop crying!" he barked.

Beatrice gulped, imperfectly subdued a sob, and began to eat, the tears running down her cheeks. Ethel came in, her eyes reddened. She passed a plate of soggy biscuits and then made a sudden exit, sniffing before the flopping door was stilled behind her.

"Good heavens!" exploded Stanley. Again the little nurse jumped and then became rigidly still. "What's the matter with Ethel?" he asked of Elizabeth.

"The laundress didn't come," answered Elizabeth wearily. "Her husband is sick and she couldn't; and I had to send Ethel to town to the laundry. We're short of sheets—changing the bed so many times a day makes it—and Ethel said she was too tired and she cried."

"I went to town," said Stanley. "I could have done that."

"You?" said Elizabeth. "I never thought of that." She surveyed her father for a few moments. "Mother never let us ask you to do anything," she explained. "She always said you weren't like other children's fathers."

Stanley coughed, reached for a biscuit, and spread it quickly.

"Where was Roger?" he asked.

"He'd gone to the country to get

eggs," answered Elizabeth. "And Wiggy—where were you, Wiggy?"

"Typing," replied that young man. "Sorry I didn't know about the errand. I'd have been glad to go. How is she?" he ended, turning to the little nurse.

The little nurse raised her eyes.

"She's doing as well as can be expected," she answered firmly, assured on her own ground. "Don't worry or think about her!"

"Which means nothing!" said Stanley irritably and then: "This tea is cold!"

This time Elizabeth's eyes filled.

"I'm so tired," she wailed, "and nothing goes right! Ethel said she'd leave to-day, if it weren't for mother—and if your tea is cold you've just got to stand it." She stopped, astounded at thus speaking to her father, and then the pent-up irritations of the day urged her on. "It's a great deal of trouble to make tea for one person, anyway," she complained, "when every one else takes coffee afterward. Mother's done it for you all these years. Servants hate extra things like that. We've never appreciated her!" She ended in a loud wail and rose, the tears rolling down her face, to vanish in the hall direction. Stanley said nothing. It was one of those moments which was too big for worn-out, too-used expletives. He drank the tea quickly. Diana was pained.

"Really," she said, "I think——"

"What?" exploded Stanley.

"It is too fearful," she said, "this sort of thing for your nerves, after the sort of work you do!"

There was a painful silence.

"The house is bound to be upset," said Wiggy, stepping into the breach, "and Mr. Johns can't think of anything but Mrs. Johns, anyway, so work is by the side."

Roger, catching his father's eye, smiled disagreeably at this and then his smile faded. Diana pushed aside her

dessert, took her coffee, and went into the adjoining room. Stanley followed her. The little nurse went to the kitchen to beat up an albumen and Roger and Wiggy sat alone.

"Wouldn't you think," said Roger after a gulp, "that just now he'd try to be decent?"

"Don't say it," advised Wiggy, "even to me."

"If she doesn't—get well"—Roger stopped and coughed—"I'll clear out. I wouldn't stick around with *him*!" A change in Wiggy's face should have warned, but Roger was not looking at Wiggy. His tragic, easily tear-flooded young eyes had been fixed on his napkin ring, with which he was playing nervously. From the door where he stood, Stanley heard what Roger said. He turned away without speaking.

"I've earned that," he thought, as a hurt such as he'd never dreamed his son could give him swept across his soul. "I deserve it!"

Diana hurried along in the cold November moonlight. She did not know where she was going but she was going! Stay in that house another night? Never! What a brute, a beast, he was! She stopped suddenly, breathing hard. Life was ended, of course. She thought of the Bränders' pond and of how he would feel if her body were dragged from it. She made quite a pathetic picture of this and enjoyed it immensely; but when she thought of the first step toward this end, she shuddered. Like a great many people who dwell on suicide, her thought was only an emotional indulgence. No, not that, she decided, after her shudder. She was young and her life would be splendid in spite of him!

Here in the bend of the road, one night he had kissed her: one of the early times when he had gone half mad when she touched him; half mad, afraid while he remembered her, and

then fierce and brutally strong as he forgot her, through her shell. Another night echoed in her memory, a night when they had made a pretense of getting an important letter off and had hurried into the village post office, taking two hours for a trip that could have been made in three quarters of an hour.

How many times he had come for her at the Branders' and how they had lingered going home! Mary, at that time, had known. Diana was sure of this. She had been so stodgily busy with her mending when they came in. "I am mending for my husband and his children," her hands had seemed to say. As if anything so little could fasten a real man! But—he wasn't that! Poor creature, who was afraid to try the deep waters!

A blind rage overcame Diana and she paused again, trembling.

All his caresses loomed as insults. All hers as something too beautiful, broken and wasted. The talk which had come after the bad dinner recurred. He had followed her to the hall where very softly she had begun to play snatches of Debussy.

"You'd better not," he said. "You might disturb her."

"The soft pedal's on," she answered coolly.

"I'd rather you wouldn't, please, until Mary's better."

Diana rose, closed the piano. She shrugged her shoulders slightly.

"Diana," said Stanley, looking at her, "I'm forty-five and a great fool. Could you go to the Branders' for a little while? They are very fond of you."

That was subtly flattering; the lack of control it implied, a wonderful tribute.

"I will help you to be strong!" she murmured.

Then did Stanley Johns do the thing that Diana never forgave.

"My dear child," he said, laughing, "that is—really rich! I know I'm no

good, but, in all frankness, you helped me to stray. And do you know that she probably knew? My son—seems to think so. He told me with an air that she had been miserable for months with a sickness worse than physical."

"She would have to suffer," said Diana, "but as I said, if she loved you, the suffering would be her offering, her tribute. And when two people——"

"Forget the laws," broke in Stanley, "and snatch their happiness—if it would prove to be that—at the expense of every one else's peace and pride—why, my dear child, think of the life of a woman so abandoned and the way the children would grow up, ashamed of their father and his story. Three of them, you know!"

Diana moved away.

Stanley laughed unpleasantly.

"While we were imagining moonlight rides in Venice," he said, "she was making our comfort, shielding, working for us, and suffering on account of us."

"What are your ideas about *love*?" asked Diana. "Have you forgotten what I *gave* you?"

Stanley put his hands on her shoulders. He shook her gently and felt none of her cruel appeal through his touch of her.

"I have stained you," he said, "but as surely, you have stained me. I have been a great fool all my life, but never such a cruel one before. Forgive me and yourself and marry that little Branders pup who is crazy about you. Have children, Diana. They'll keep you straight. Darn socks, as Mary does"—he paused—"and," he went on softly, "you'll find yourself helping yourself and every one else."

Then Diana spoke—blistering accusations whispered in a shaking voice.

"It's all true, I know, and I thank you," Stanley said simply, and then he turned away.

At the dining-room door he had heard Roger's opinion of him and had



turned, shaking and aching, to go to his study. His inkwell was empty and full of a thick, flaky deposit. A button gone from his coat, the one he always buttoned, left him vaguely troubled from the unusual looseness of that garment.

He began to see, as he suffered from the loss of what Diana gave him, his children's indifference, and his hate of himself, what putting buttons on and filling inkwells meant, the echo that those small acts were of love, unselfishness, and giving. The littleness of the deeds faded and was swallowed up in the things that made them and these were too tall for Stanley K. Johns to reach, to see, or even gauge with the sort of eyes that God had given him. He knew this from suffering, and the knowledge made him grow.

He hurried down the hall. He had always gone to Mary with his hurts and he had to now. The day nurse met him at the door of the room where Mary lay.

"Can't I see her a moment?" he entreated.

The nurse decided that he could.

"But don't excite her," she warned. "You really mustn't!"

He went in. Mary opened her eyes slowly. She smiled with evident effort. Stanley's throat felt thick. He tried to speak, failed, and groped for her hand, so curiously white and idle looking for Mary's hand!

"Will you *please* get well?" he whispered uncertainly, after a moment, and then he hid his face against her arm, seeking desperately for control. Mary didn't answer. When Stanley raised his head, he saw that she was crying.

"My God!" he said, "what have I done? She told me *not* to excite you. I didn't mean to. I'm sure my manner was calm, but perhaps Ethel's threatening to leave and the children all crying did upset me!"

Mary moved suddenly.

"Ethel?" she asked. "What is the matter?" She mopped her tears away with a little square of medicated cheesecloth, and then looked up at her husband.

"Nothing, nothing at all!" said the returned nurse, glaring at Stanley K. Johns, utterly forgetful of her late awe of him. "Everything's going beautifully, Mrs. Johns, everything. I think Ethel had a toothache, but she's all right now. And now, Mr. Johns, I'm sorry, but you must go."

"Wait," said Mary, "just a moment. I want to see him, may I? For a minute alone."

The nurse nodded and went to stand outside the door.

"Do you really want me to get well?" she whispered.

"Oh—" gasped Stanley, and then he leaned down and kissed her hand and, because her arm drew him close, her cheek. "I am not fit for you," he said, with a catch in his breath.

"Oh, yes, you are, dear," answered Mary happily. "Why, there's a button off your coat. Tell Ethel I'll be up soon and that to-morrow I'll help her plan meals myself." And, as Stanley vanished, she added: "Now, I wonder whether Elizabeth's been trying to run things?"

## CHAPTER X.

"Damn!" said Stanley K. Johns. The inkwell was empty. "Mary!" he called loudly. Mary, who had been up for over two weeks, appeared in the doorway. "Do you know that my inkwell's empty?" he asked in a painfully low, repressed voice. "I ask, is it proper for a man with a secretary and a wife who says she likes—"

"There, there, dear!" said Mary, coming forward with a big bottle and filling the well. Then she disappeared, looking back from the door. Her husband didn't see her. He was engrossed, submerged, happily gone in his work.



"You're so sweet," he said unexpectedly and sharply. "I haven't always acted as I should to you—"

"Oh, nonsense!" said Mary. "Dear, there's a thread on your shoulder."

Mary went downstairs. Roger was sitting on the long bench which backed against the stair, polishing skates. He looked up and smiled.

"Hello, mumsie," he said.

"My dear," said Mary, puffing a little, "I didn't know you were home from school. My goodness, I *did* spill ink that time. Right in the middle of the front breadth, too. Skating, dear?"

Mary sat down and reached for her mending basket. Her son watched her.

"The laundry runs them through the mangle," she said, holding up a union suit, "and takes the buttons off. What have you to tell me? I see it in your eyes. We're going to have hot mince pie to-night, so do be in time for dinner. Mrs. Sipe doesn't think that

brandy is good for growing boys, but I don't think a dash—a hole in your gloves? Let me see, Roger."

Roger passed over his gloves.

"I've been to the Branders'," he said.

"Yes?" answered Mary. Then she emptied her button box, putting the desired buttons, selected after much pawing, in her mouth. "How is Diana?" she asked bravely, if somewhat thickly. "And why doesn't she run in oftener? I declare I've only seen the child once since I've been about. Her flowers were lovely. I hope you told her how pretty they were."

"I didn't! Mother, you'll swallow one of those buttons!"

"No, I won't. I hoped you'd think

to speak of them. I wrote her, but I think an added word means a lot. How is she?"

"Well, and pretty as ever. She's going to marry Billy. She's been flirting with him all summer. I saw him kiss her way back in July."

"You shouldn't have told me," said Mary, dumping the somewhat dampened buttons out on the bench. Her face was glorious with happiness. "I'm sure I hope they'll be happy," she continued after a moment. "Are the Branders pleased?"

"Oh, yes. They're pleased enough. They aren't the kind who think. Diana said that since she was to be married so soon, she wouldn't come back here." Roger paused. "How did you stand it, mother?" he asked bluntly.

Mary carefully placed a button and took the first fastening stitches before she answered.

"It was hard," she acknowledged, "but with your father—well, years ago I stopped thinking of him as a husband, at least, all the time—and any woman is much happier if she does that—and began to think of him in the light of—of—"

"A spankable brat!" interspersed her son. "But you know, mother, that satisfaction is denied, and he's not!"

"No, but he's like one in a way," said Mary. "Any man is. He's foolish and silly. Of course, I love him, you know that—my, there's a draft here!—and I don't say I didn't suffer. I did. I thought it might be very unpleasant, before he was through with it. The child had ideas, you see. She smoked and thought that love was as easy to put on as a bonnet and that the person who wore it could take it off like a bonnet, too. Well, you know, they can't, and there's something about the cement of the years that makes a person as clever as your father is, even love a person as stupid as I am. She didn't reckon with that. She thought

I was dumpy, and I am, and that I didn't stimulate your father. I don't, but he doesn't need it. Why, when Miss Townsend, who gave those Browning readings here that summer when every one had rose colds, stimulated him and they chased around together so much, he did such poor work that even he didn't think it was good. And then she went away and he began to fume about inkwells and the noise you children made, and was perfectly natural and did good work again."

"I remember," said Roger, "but that wasn't as bad."

"No," agreed Mary, "this was the worst." She laughed, selected another button, and then spoke. "My, how I cried!" she said. "I used to do it while I was cleaning the bathtub. Ethel never does seem to get around to that! It was the only time one of you children wasn't tagging around me and so I did let out! Then, when you showed that you understood and were nice to me, that helped, but it hurt, too. Look here, dearie," she said, an earnestness showing in her face.

"Yes?" answered her son. He was thinking bitterly of his father. It showed in his voice.

"I want you to be nice to your father," said Mary. "It's all over, and it doesn't help me to have you so short with him, Roger. He's awfully sorry, dearie. The other day he got in the bathtub and there wasn't any soap in the dish, and he didn't say a word, and you can see from that that he's not himself. And you know if you want me to be happy—I suppose you do?"

Roger nodded.

"You'll forget this and treat him naturally. My happiness consists in having you people feel pleasantly toward each other. This house is my office, you know, and when the force quarrels, my whole world is wrong. I

don't mind hard work, or your father's getting excited over contracts, or a flat omelette, or too strong or too weak tea, if you people love each other. I need that! I can't run without it. It's my gasoline—it's any mother's."

"I can't be decent to him, mother, not after the way——"

"Yes, you can," contradicted Mary. "Wasn't I nice to that snip even while she despised me for the excellencies of my own cooking? My, how she lapped it up, thinking all the time that I was a drag on your father! When will they be married?"

"February."

"Well, well! You know her mother—your father told me this years ago, but he's probably forgotten it—had just such an affair before she met Mr. Kinkead, and she took him on the bounce, and let him heal her heart, and she made a good wife. I do hope Diana will make a good one, too. Billy's a good boy!"

"Oh, it'll be all right," said Roger. "She's beginning to enjoy the importance their money brings, and she loves spending it. You can see that."

"She dresses beautifully," said Mary. "She made me feel a frump always."

There were steps on the stair, and Stanley came hurrying down. He was tired from a long day at his desk and his face showed that he had really worked.

"I'd thought of a tramp," he said, seeing his son's skates. "I've been working pretty hard."

He sat down and looked miserably at Mary. If he could just confess! If she wouldn't be so kind, so *kind*! But she was too good and beautiful ever to understand a guilt as black as his! Thank God, Roger had been wrong and she had never seen!

Roger opened his mouth and then spoke with evident effort. A mental icicle seemed to crack and then unwillingly thaw with his words.

"May I go with you?" asked Roger, glaring at the rug. The look on Mary's face was reward enough.

"I wish you would," said Stanley humbly. Then he leaned forward and covered Mary's hand with his.

"The needle, dear," she cautioned.

"You're so sweet," he said unexpectedly and sharply. "I haven't always—acted as I should to you."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Mary. "Dear there's a thread on your shoulder."

Roger, struggling into a big coat, grinned on them, something new and beautiful in his eyes. Stanley got up, got into his outdoor things, and started toward the door.

"I'm insane," he said, "when I don't realize how utterly I depend on you—what you are to me!"

Alone, Mary wiped her eyes on the ankle of a union suit and then said:

"Thank God, that's over!" after which she looked toward the door. "I do hope," she added fervently, "that they have their mufflers!"

Outdoors the two male things walked over scrunching snow.

"Your mother must never know what a fool I was," Stanley was saying. This came after a frank confession in spite of the fact that there were no names mentioned.

"No," said Roger, "I suppose a man has to shield a woman," and he grinned ecstatically at a golden winter sun that was sinking fast in the west sky.

"Your mother isn't the kind who would understand a failing such as that," added Stanley.

"And yet," said Roger, "she understands a lot we don't give her credit for, dad. She's pretty wonderful!" He stopped, laughed happily, but not quite steadily. "Where would this family be without her?" he asked. "She knows men! Don't you fool yourself. We're going to have mince pie for dinner and she knows we like the buttons on our clothes!"



# Girls *and the* Race

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Intimacy and Allure," "Is Love Enough?" etc.

SHE brought it to a meeting of the little club that was known to the irreverent as the "Talk-Festers."

It was a letter from her married sister who lived in a small city lacking such advantages, and the sister begged for assistance in these words:

"I am in an awful quandary about Marian. She is seventeen now, you know. That is, you ought to know, for she is your goddaughter as well as your niece, and perhaps you remember the year when you nearly dropped her at the christening font. However, that isn't what I started to say. I started to ask you what you thought I ought to do. What do mothers, in more enlightened centers than this city of Oreville, do when their girls grow suddenly mature and horribly searching? It seems ridiculous, but there isn't a mother of my acquaintance here to whom I can talk with any hope of clarifying my own ideas on the maternal duty toward girls in their teens. Our information seems to end with the appearance of the permanent teeth!

"Marian asked me quite seriously the other forenoon, when she and I were sitting together in the sewing room, tucking a white voile for her, what was considered the highest profession for a woman to follow. And I replied thoughtlessly and like the par-

rot I am: 'Why, motherhood, of course.'

"Marian looked at me so ponderingly that I felt myself tried and convicted of the sin of parroting, even before she spoke. Then she said: 'Um. Is fatherhood considered the highest profession for a man to follow?'

"I am ashamed to say that I slightly lost my temper. 'Don't try to be smart and modern, Marian,' I said tartly. Watch what you are doing. You are puckering that blouse.'

"Marian undid the puckers quite docilely, and then she said so mildly that I was ashamed of my own petulance: 'I didn't mean to be smart, mother. I was really trying to think something out, and I was only wishing that you would help me think it out. It was like this—if a mother's relation to her children is a business, a profession, what is a father's? Is that just something pleasant and personal, like his relations to his friends? What I want to know is this, you see: Why should a woman's personal relations be a profession to her, while a man's aren't to him? Why can't she just enjoy hers, as he does his, and be—a doctor or a dressmaker or a secretary or something for a business?'

"Well, I saw with a daughter as patient and judicial as Marian, it wasn't

going to be enough to switch her on to some other line of thought, like a coral-colored sweater, or loganberry juice for her dance that evening. If motherhood was the high profession I had so glibly named it, how was I showing up as a professor when I couldn't talk these things over with my daughter without losing my temper?

"But the trouble was that I wasn't able to talk them over! I had never thought them through, if you know what I mean. I don't suppose that most women have thought them through, but if most women have daughters like my Marian, they've got to think them through now, or lose their daughters and their self-respect in the bargain! Marian has a good mind and she has been much better educated than you and I were, Louise. That is, she has been trained to face facts. We were fed on noble and sentimental axioms. 'Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever' was the keynote of our education. But Marian sees no reason why she cannot be both good and clever, and she says she doesn't think that she can even be good without being reasonably intelligent! She told me so!

"The things she put up to me in that miserable morning in the sewing room! I had to come down off my maternal high horse, you see, and confess to her that I had never spent much time in the consideration of the philosophy underlying woman's place in the scheme of things. I had to call her attention rather pointedly to the fact that I had, nevertheless, made a fairly successful job of life, that I had kept a man and four children well and happy and useful. And Marian looked at me with that contemplative air of hers and said: 'But, mother, don't you think you might have been even more successful if you had really known what you were doing?' Know what I was doing, if you please, Louise! But she wasn't

pert—she was scientifically interested; and I had to accept that fact, and to say that perhaps I might have been, and that I would be glad to try to think things out with her!

"These are a few of the posers she put to me. They hinge, you see, on that dread fact that 'male and female created He them,' the dread fact we were taught to put out of our minds when we were young! I need your help in trying to answer her. She asks why should the intimate, human relations constitute a profession for women, and remain merely the intimate, human joys of life for men? But, if it is true, if it is really true—I wish you could hear Marian stress that 'really'—then why on earth doesn't society recognize the human relations as woman's final profession and prepare her for them?

"'Society,' says Marian accusingly to me, as if I embodied the old thing, 'doesn't recognize motherhood as a profession to the extent of paying women to be mothers.' I murmured that some States did, that there were mothers' pensions, and that, during the war, soldiers' wives received allowances, allotments, for their children, as a matter of course. She nodded, a little impressed, but she wanted to know why they didn't continue to receive allotments of their husbands' salaries or wages just as automatically in peace as in war. I answered weakly that it might some time come to that, I supposed.

"Then she wanted to know why, if society really meant what it said about the high profession of motherhood, it frowned so upon unmarried mothers. I almost lost my temper again. It is a dreadful thing, Louise, to have your daughter try to discuss such things with you! But I reflected that she was bound to discuss them with some one, since they were on her mind, and that it had better be I. I answered, a little incoherently, with words about the



beauty of love and the monogamous home.

"'Oh!' said Marian, in that horrible, balancing way of hers. 'Oh! So it isn't just motherhood that is the highest profession for a woman—it's wifehood in a monogamous home, and then motherhood.' I replied sullenly that it was. And then she wanted to know what was to become of the women who didn't fit into that picture, and whether it would not be a social waste to train such women for it; and whether it was a social waste to train the girls who were to fit into the picture for something else, like stenography or chemistry and how you were going to distinguish in time between the professional mothers and the professional non-mothers.

"But that wasn't all! I don't think it was even the worst. The worst was when she said to me very solemnly: 'Mother, if it is all true what you have been saying—and it sounds awfully pretty—about motherhood being the profession that engages all the best of a woman's intellect and all the best of her emotions, and that rewards her the most richly, why aren't girls encouraged to boast of their ambition to become mothers? I remember when I was eleven and you heard me saying to a crowd of boys and girls that, when I grew up, I wanted to have six children, three girls and three boys, you told me, afterward, that I was too big a girl to talk that way. Why is it indelicate for a big girl to talk like that, and proper only for a cunning little one who can't know in the least what she is talking about?'

"My dear Louise, I give you my word, I did not know the answer!

"Oh, the things connected with this professionalizing of motherhood that I didn't know the answer to! Was it because the continuance of the species depended so greatly upon the willingness of women to be mothers that peo-

ple had agreed to call it the highest profession, she wanted to know. And did I, sitting there in all the wisdom of my middle age, think that the race was any such wonderful thing as to deserve to be continued at the price of one's personal aspirations? She rather thought she would prefer to study geology! Yes, Louise, she did, that child, who is already a woman, that woman who is still a little, dreaming child, asked me that! What was the use of trying to flash a Jovian thunderbolt at her, and to blast her with the announcement that she mustn't be impious? She didn't mean to be impious. She was only saying aloud some of the things that simmer beneath her bobbed hair half the day, I suppose! She said that she wasn't at all sure she herself should consider the race worth maintaining when the time came. She thought it had been acting worse than a lot of wild animals, if I cared to know her opinion!

"And even if it were worth continuing, she said, even if it could some day be proved to her that the primal duty of woman was to help maintain it, why need that conclusion limit the professions open to the female to the bearing and rearing of children? Weren't there other ways of continuing the race, that is, of saving it? She talked of epidemics that doctors have put down. She talked dreamily of asylums where little, abandoned children were cared for. She talked of pioneers who opened up new lands and made them productive for the feeding of the race. My dear, your goddaughter is a wonderful little girl, and she made her mother quake with fear and pride as she sat there, tucking voile and talking in funny, little, jerky sentences about the meaning of life!

"I dare say that nature will take care of her. But nature is sometimes a cruel force. I hate to think that I, that almost all mothers, send our little girls

out into the world with no adequate weapons against what may prove to be a demoniac force, 'red in tooth and claw.' And when girls want the weapons so, when they seek and search so wistfully for a true rule of life! Can't you Talk-Festers, can't the philosophers, the feminists, the colleges—some one!—exercise ingenious minds upon their problems and formulate a little

set of rules to which we mothers may refer as we do to the books on baby feeding? Mental pabulum for girls in their teens! And remember, Louise, they won't be put off any longer with 'do lovely things, not dream them, all day long.' You can't rule them any longer with the categorical imperative. They've got to know the reason! Why is going to tell them what it is?"



### SOME BIRDS

HE is a wise owl indeed who always knows what is in his own nest.

If you will have your canary sing, take him away from his mate—the reason, I suppose, why most men whistle on the street.

If the bird of paradise were an angel, would woman wear his feathers on her hat?

Leonardo da Vinci was the first man to discover the truth that robins mate for life. History does not tell us the name of the first man to prove that men and women are not robins.

When the ostrich grows foolish, he hides his head in the sand. In which respect, he is wiser, after all, than a lot of people.

The ruffed grouse does not blame it on his wife.

Little cares the pelican for the high cost of living. He can stow away luncheon and dinner while Garçon is punching his meal ticket for breakfast.

So far as known to date, no compounder of hair tonic has been enterprising enough to claim that his mixture will put a pompadour on the bald-headed eagle.

You may boast the eye of the eagle, but it is more important to have the wings of the eagle on which to go after what you see, and the talons of the eagle to catch and hold what you go after.

The "goose that lays the golden eggs" is always the goose that somebody has killed before she lays them.

Ornithologists tell us the secretary bird does not use a typewriter. Some chickens are more progressive.

ALOYSIUS COLL.

# Iris Madison Gets *a* Thrill

By Charles Chadwick

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

A love story of rare and delicate charm.

**I**T will be simple enough to tell this story when it is once begun. It needs some kind of a general proposition to start off with, which the story is supposed to illustrate. In other words, it should be a criticism of life, as your English professor in college used to say. Having the story itself all ready, the difficulty is to find a beginning which exactly fits.

The other day in a restaurant, during a pause in the music, I overheard a young woman two tables away remark: "Every human being ought to have a thrill every day of his life." She was quite a pretty young woman and was, possibly, not aware that others were getting their daily allowance then and there, looking at her. This fragment of her talk, broken away from its original moorings and drifting across the buzz of conversation at the intervening tables, might be recaptured and used here; or an introduction might be made by remarking, sententiously, that the "race is not always to the swift." But the trouble with this time-honored remark is the implication that Walter du Raismes was slow—like a tortoise.

He wasn't. He was only lazy. In college, that seething maelstrom of adolescent furiousness, Walter had been noted for an ambition, not a wholly unattainable one to a college man, to sit in a morris chair indefinitely, with a perpetual stein of beer on the flat arm and a perpetual supply of cigarettes. Outside of that he was noted for anything but slowness. His roommate, Bob Randolph, was not slow, either.

He was the fastest half back on the gridiron in his day, and the surest at keeping his feet. May I interpolate, without fear of offense, that Walter's speed in those halcyon days was of a different kind in respect to always keeping his feet? You will then see at once the distinction; and, to get back to thrills, you will understand how Bob Randolph could give half a hundred thrills to forty thousand people in the course of four periods of fifteen minutes each; while Walter du Raismes never gave any one a thrill unless it was the campus policeman at one a. m.

This isn't a college story. It is best to come at once to the time, a few years out of college, when Walter and Bob, no longer "men" but ordinary human boys, are both in love with the same girl.

And now I see my mistake. I ought to have begun with the girl. I hesitated because, in a manner of speaking, she was only half. To be exact, she was one of the two Madison girls. Dot was the other. *Her* name was Iris. The Madison girls went together—usually walking, taking long tramps.

This place was a valley in the mountains. It formed a background for the Madison girls. There was a summer colony. A score of cottages built of rough timber, covered with dark slabs, and flanked by porches, hid away from each other in the young birch woods trailing up the mountainside. Water pipes like silver strings ran along the ground down from a mountain spring, and outdoor shower baths sequestered

themselves behind palings. The cottages were connected by wooden paths varied by shaky flights of steps. At night, with everything grown mysterious and wildwoody and far away, you found your way about with a bug light. Up at the head of the valley rose the summit of the Wittemberg. It formed part of the view from the porch of the

clubhouse. Everybody from the cottages ate in this big clubhouse and danced there, and gave theatricals, and talked approvingly about everybody else.

If any one tells you all summer places are alike in respect to the kind and amount of gossip indulged in, you want to go to Camp Algonquin. That is, if you can get properly introduced and accepted. It is different. The people are all healthy and strong and they like each other. There is something about the clear air, the warm sunshine, the bigness of things, that makes you see how human and kind-hearted everybody can be.

The Madison girls, as you have already guessed, were of the athletic type, tall and lithe. Moreover, they had brown hair, fair, clear, oval faces, tip-tilted noses, and carried their clothes in a carefree manner, with all kinds of style and pep, and without effort. You know that type. In appearance one was a picture of the other, except that Iris' eyes flashed and Dot's eyes had a quiet, steady gleam. This was rather misleading the first time you met them, because Iris, with all her bright glances, was the sophisticated one; so far as a perfectly healthy girl of nineteen, who has always had too much of whatever was good for her, can be described as sophisticated. Dot, on the other hand, possessed a sort of quiet enthusiasm. She was



"Can you wake me at four o'clock to-morrow morning?" he asked.

naïvely enthusiastic about everything—tennis, mountain climbing, dancing, teas, boys, Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, Tennyson, and Frank Tinney—to name only a few out of the long list of her winter and summer interests.

Iris was really fond, in an undemonstrative way, of music, particularly of piano recitals and grand opera. She didn't say much about it. She liked Frank Tinney, also, and some of the other things Dot liked. She had a more critical sense of values. She was flashing on the surface, but underneath a little tired of most things. It will help you to understand this story of which she is heroine if you remember this much about Iris. Call her blasé for short, if you want to. Or you can guess that she was that rare delight when you find it—a girl with brains.

They were habituated to playing. Like all healthy young people they played hard. At the summer camp, tramping on roads and mountain trails formed a great part of their play; and Dot and Iris Madison were popularly supposed to be able to outwalk, out-tennis, or outanything outdoors, everybody—until Bob Randolph came.

For example, before Bob's arrival, they took out one time a convoy of boys, and the whole crowd did the old Curtis trail up over Giant's Ledge, down to Winnisook, up Slide, Cornell, Wittemberg, back down over the Terrace—in one day. That is twenty odd miles of the steepest climbing. The usual time for the trip is two days, spending the night midway in a cave on Wittemberg where you have to drive out the porcupines and take turns tending the fire all night to keep them away. But they made the trip in one day, and joyfully recorded their adventure, with the date, in the club's memorandum book.

Then came Bob—it was along toward the end of July. He had never been to Camp Algonquin before, though he

knew some of the people; and as soon as he arrived and was made known by Walter du Raismes, he was recognized for his reputation and acclaimed as an acquisition. He didn't need to do or say anything. He was *the* Randolph, a recent all-American half back.

One evening, thumbing idly over the worn pages of the club book, he came upon the record of the most recent exploit, the trip over the Curtis trail. He got up, put his hands in his pockets, whistled, and walked over to a map tacked on the wall and studied it. He sought the housekeeper.

"Can you wake me at four o'clock to-morrow morning?" he asked.

"Why, Mr. Randolph, I—I should be glad to—if I am awake myself, then."

"Oh, never mind," said Bob cheerfully, "I'll borrow Mr. du Raismes' alarm clock."

He strolled off, leaving the good woman, accustomed as she was to things of this nature, in a state of mild curiosity as to his plans.

The next morning he folded to a convenient size a geological survey sheet, with the trails outlined, and thrust it into his hip pocket, stole with the impudent familiarity of a young man down into the unprotected pantry, found a loaf of bread, broke it in half, and squeezed the portions into his coat pockets, drank a quart of milk, and was off alone in the wet freshness of the dawn. He was back at seven minutes before noon. And until Walter and others cross-examined him on the different parts of the trails, and made sure he wasn't trying to put over a practical joke, no one would believe, at first, that he had covered the distance, had actually made that two-day trip in a forenoon.

But it was a fact.

The Madison girls made another elaborate entry in the book, going six miles to the village and buying a bottle

of red ink on purpose. And no one was more delighted at this record performance than they were themselves. Dot talked herself into a state of exhaustion, going all over the camp and explaining it to every one. By dinner time Bob was more than ever the recognized athletic hero of the place.

To come to the story. A great many boys took to Dot, and Bob did at first; but later he gravitated toward Iris. Most observers guessed, and guessed rightly, that the *one* was Iris; though some still held out for Dot. It is worthy of notice in this connection that Walter's and Bob's ways of making love were different; or, to be exact, Walter didn't make love at all. He just sat back and looked at Iris Madison whenever she chose to come within his range of vision. He would remain at breakfast, letting his coffee get cold and his cigarette burn into a thin ash and break off unnoticed while he watched quietly as Iris, over in the corner of the big dining room, ate her three courses of fruit, cereal, and eggs, preparatory to taking a walk with Bob. Iris sometimes looked back at him—that look of an old friend which might be translated: "I know you're there, just like the furniture." But she must have carried away with her some picture of him—any girl would.

Or he sat in the afternoon on the porch, watching the crowd play tennis. Change the morris chair in the college dormitory and the stein on the arm to a rustic porch chair and a glass of lemonade; change campus to camp, and you have him, still the same Walter du Raismes.

You will ask: What could Walter do, then? Why is he and not Bob, the hero of the story? Wait and you will see. Perhaps you may guess it before you are told.

Now it is time to mention, casually, Miss Slithers. She was a really charming person of thirty-five, who painted

landscapes, was musical, and read Bergson. She used to talk to Walter because he was so appreciative. At least, she said so. There was an old-fashioned square piano in the big club-room. It was banged on by all the youthful ten fingers in camp, and was used alternately with the victrola for dancing. Miss Slithers didn't play for dancing. It spoiled one's touch, she said. Walter didn't seem to care much about his touch. The crowd could always count on him to play. He was supremely good-natured, and a supremely poor dancer, and so they used to hang over him as though he were the center of attraction until they got him started. "Oh, Walter, do play for us! Oh, *really*, will you? That will be perfectly *thrilling!*" And all that kind of thing. Then they'd go off and dance and forget all about him. Once he looked up as Iris told him, with a little perfunctory emphasis, that it would be "thrilling." He singled her out of the crowd that clustered about the piano.

"I'll give you a thrill, some day, Iris," he said soberly.

Which remark, because of its importance in the story, deserves all the emphasis a separate paragraph will give it.

Iris, on this occasion, flashed a glance back at him out of her deep eyes.

"I'd be glad of that, thank you!" she laughed.

As the summer went on, Walter used to watch Iris and Bob dancing together as he played. Sometimes he struck wrong notes as his mind strayed too far from the keyboard and he thought of how well these two went together. When he did this he used to grin a little to himself.

In the course of time, they had a concert for the benefit of something or other. Miss Slithers played selections from Grieg, Debussy, and Sibelius. Walter sat between the Madison girls and kept half of them in a suppressed





"Walter! What is it? How did you know this was here? Why, I never heard——"

giggle with his serious put-on stare of appreciation—the Dot half. Iris, fond of music as she was, thought Walter too cynical and heartless, and disapproved of his behavior.

"I think you're horrid!"

"Miss Slithers doesn't use the pedal right. She uses it like a schoolgirl," replied Walter, sotto voce, attempting to justify his attitude.

"Thank you, I am a schoolgirl."

"It's a rotten piano, too, even if they did tune it," added Walter.

"Even so, I think we ought to listen."

Miss Slithers was using her arms and wrists quite in the approved fashion—so far, at least, as the eye was concerned. Her method of striking the keys might be described to the uninitiated as an orgy of relaxation.

"You're an awful prig, Walter, or else you know all about the piano!"

"I'm an awful prig," said Walter.

"Sh—keep still, please," commanded Iris.

"Do you like music, really?"

"More than anything in the world—real music," Iris whispered.

Walter turned his attention to Dot, but he contrived to study Iris out of the corner of his eye, and thought over what she had said about liking real music.

Walter spent all the next day by himself, thinking about Iris. His dream of her seemed as far away and as difficult to reach as the summit of the Wittemberg which he could see from where he sat.

A telegram came for him. He announced rather regretfully that he had to go to New York on business. The crowd joked him about his general and specific aptitude for "business." Walter did not reply to the jokes. He climbed into the bus drawn by two horses and driven by a darky coachman, waved good-by, and was off down the road. He was gone three weeks.

During that three weeks Bob Randolph asked Iris Madison to marry him.

Bob didn't realize that Walter was his rival. He had no idea he had any advantage in Walter's absence. Indeed, how should he? Even had he known, Walter's absence or presence would have made little difference to one of his direct methods.

Bob's proposal was like a whirlwind. It nearly swept Iris off her feet, experienced as she was with boy proposals. And yet what she said was:

"Bob, dear, I don't know. Honestly, I don't. It ought to be *real*. I want it to be so! Yes, I am crazy about you!"

Bob reluctantly agreed to let her think it over.

Walter returned at the end of the three weeks and was welcomed by every one cheerfully. Then he was forgotten immediately in the interest of a tennis tournament. Bob and Iris were playing doubles and were putting up a slashing game. Just before lunch the two of them came up the steps swinging their rackets and bathed in perspiration. Iris wore a soft green sweater and short white skirt. Her hair was tied up with

a piece of rope. It had come down and Bob had laughingly fixed it for her that way. The rope looked like a Greek fillet, and she like a nymph in beautiful disarray. She glowed with health and was a picture. Walter called out to her as she swung past:

"Oh, Iris!"

She and Bob walked over to him. Walter offered his chair. Iris flung herself into it with a gasp of fatigue.

"Whew!" she exclaimed.

"I have an idea," said Walter. "Let's you and me go for a tramp, after lunch, up Wittemberg."

"That certainly is a startling idea for you, Walter!" laughed Iris.

"Iris is tired. She can't go," put in Bob.

Iris flashed him a glance of disdain. She had only played four sets of tennis—a mere nothing. All she said was:

"We haven't anything on for this afternoon, Bobikins. Have we?"

"N-no," reluctantly admitted her partner in the tournament. "That is, no tennis."

"All right, Walter. I'll be perfectly thrilled to go!"

She sprang out of the chair and went into the dining room.

After lunch, Iris and Walter started up the road at a swinging gait. The road paralleled a mountain creek which sang its music, falling down over the roots of hemlocks and sycamores which arched above it, and hurrying and rushing over an inordinately wide bed of stones which it had polished and rounded. They came to where the trail left the road, dipped down, and crossed the creek. They leaped accurately from one smooth stone to another—there was no bridge—and scrambled over a fence and up into a field on the other side, where the clank of a cowbell proclaimed the presence of cattle in the tall grass among the scattered young pines. A half mile farther they struck the foot of the trail where it winds up,

a worn stony path through the thick birches. They began the climb in earnest. At the first spring, under a great overhanging damp ledge, they paused for a drink.

"Isn't it a glorious day!" cried Iris, her face wet with drops of mountain water.

You will be allowed, now, to guess that Walter had been secretly training for this climb. You will guess wrong. He had done nothing of the kind. He did manage to keep up with Iris, however. Whether it was that the keen edge of her appetite for athletics had been slightly dulled by a morning of tournament tennis, or whether after so many triumphs she did not care especially to leave Walter behind, it is hard to tell. In any event she set only a moderate pace. Walter concealed his fatigue manfully until, after one final upward climb, they emerged upon the Terrace. Here a stony, brush-covered plateau stretched before them like a shelf, and just beyond rose the overhanging cone of the summit, no longer far away and blue, but near and dark-fringed against the sky.

"Well," he gasped, out of breath, "we're—halfway. What's the—use—of rushing. Let's—look back—at the view for a while."

"Let's," agreed Iris. "I'm a little tired—not physically, you know, but mentally—of all this rushing around. I'd love to stay here all day and look over there at those mountains, like a herd of elephants, and clouds like that."

They had found a place to sit down and were leaning against a great puddingstone boulder, and were looking back in the direction from which they had climbed. Walter turned a swift glance upon her.

"I always thought you were really that kind," he said.

"What kind?"

"Bored—with things in general. I mean, underneath you are that kind of

a girl. And when you said what you did you echoed my own thoughts."

Iris sat and stared ahead of her.

"How did you guess?" she asked finally. "Do you know, I think I have changed this summer. I seem to be older. I am almost twenty now. And I have had so much of teas, dances, theater, motoring, everything, in winter, and all this endless play—play—fun—in summer. What is it all for?"

"I don't know," answered Walter. "I never got the hang of it at all myself. My father thinks I'm a loafer. He wants me to go into his office this year. But the way I feel is that I don't need to make money. He loves it—I'm glad he does—but I don't; nor to spend money either. And if I can't find the real things in life, I feel as though I would rather just keep still and do nothing."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Look at Bob. He doesn't have to earn money, either. But look at the way he works."

"Yes, Bob's a wonder, isn't he?" agreed Walter. "Well, I suppose I will do something. In fact, I have a sort of an idea."

"What is it? Do tell me!" cried Iris.

"Well, if I do anything at all," he answered, rather vaguely, "I want it to be something real, something that gives you a thrill to live with!"

"That's the trouble with me," echoed Iris. "I—I can't seem to get a thrill out of anything any more. Do you suppose there is something the matter with me? What are the real things?"

"Oh, music, pictures, books, travel—all that stuff, I suppose," replied Walter. But he watched her closely.

"What you need, Iris," he said a moment later, "is to have some one surprise you with some little thing, something new—I mean new to you—some old thing in a new setting."

They lingered a while longer, saying very little.

"Come," said Walter, getting to his feet. "If you don't mind, we'd better start now because I want to take it easy—just stroll up. I'd rather talk to you, anyway, than walk."

"All right. I haven't ever talked to you very much. Miss Slithers seems to do most of that. It's funny, I've known you so long—three summers. But you know, the crowd is always doing something, and I suppose with me, it's just habit. Yes, let's stroll along."

If you had seen them, Iris in advance, lithe as a deer, whipping her way across the plateau through the stunted brush, you might not have called it a stroll.

In the course of time, after following the blazes on the tree trunks where the trail lost itself time and again in the wild growth of the forest, they came to the final ascent, and at last after a seemingly interminable succession of ledges and ladderlike windings they reached the cold, icy, fragrant, balsam-crowned summit. They sat down near the blackened remains of a fire, on a great smooth platform of rock. They let their feet overhang the edge, and gazed out over the immense view—the kindly grandeur of rounded, forest-covered summits, the sweep of forest-buried slopes, and far-off, hazy valleys—a dream of a world.

They sat there a long time saying nothing. The wind blew chill and fragrant up the slopes of the mountain-side. It played rudely with Iris' hair. A porcupine clambered slowly toward them. Walter shied a rock at it. The porcupine stared back with its impudent, black little face, unimpressed with Walter's marksmanship, and then took a lazy, ambling departure, its quills rolling in waves over its little body. They both laughed at the creature.

"That's the way I feel myself," commented Walter, "like taking my time." He paused. "Iris," he went on, after a moment, "I brought you here to tell you something about myself—about ourselves."

Iris looked at him thoughtfully.

"Iris, what you need is to get off the beaten roads, even off the trails."

"All right," she laughed. "Let's!"

"I mean it. Come here." He got to his feet and led the way back along the trail. She followed him. After about five minutes' walk deep in the woods, he turned aside from the thread of a path which wound its way over worn roots.

"You know," he said, "a hundred yards to one side of this trail you might live a year and no one would ever find you."

They were walking now over giant boulders, buried in centuries of green moss, so deeply buried as to have lost all resemblance to stone and to have become one vast carpet of mattresses into which they sank ankle-deep; along under the lee of damp ledges with lacy, hanging borders of icicles; while overhead the virgin hemlocks towered with thin fringed branches penciled upon the blue sky. It was twilight, except where, into this mysterious gloom of the forest, the sunlight shot its haphazard golden arrows.

They paused on a little rise, looking for a possible way down. They finally found it and began to scramble down, and then Iris stopped, holding on by a root, and cried out:

"Walter! What is it? How did you know this was here? Why, I never heard——"

She broke off, staring ahead in astonishment.

"It wasn't here," said Walter, "until I put it here."

"When?"

"Just lately."

"Walter, I don't believe you! How?"

"Yes—contractor—gang of workmen—bonus for quick job."

"Oh—no!"

"No. I'm wrong, I shouldn't have said that. I took a lamp and rubbed it, and the genie came, and prostrated himself."



The little hut became an enchanted cave. Iris was silent. Her eyes flashed like jewels.

Now you will begin to surmise, while Walter is indulging in his fancy for explanations, how he had made use of his absence from the camp. But you will not surmise the whole of it, yet. Just ahead of them, in a small natural clearing in the forest, stood a log hut thatched with brush. It seemed to belong there, to have always been just

there. And yet, when they came closer, there were the freshly cut ends of the tree trunks. No path led to the door. There was just a carpet of slippery brown needles.

"What—why did you do it?"

"For you," said Walter.

"But——"

Walter took a key out of his pocket,

went up to a bark-covered door, and opened it.

"Come in," he said.

Like a nymph surprised, like a dryad drawn away from the heart of her hiding by some strange apparition, Iris tiptoed softly over the carpet of needles and entered the twilight of the little interior.

"Oh, Walter," she said, "you have given me a *thrill*!"

Indeed, he had. Inside, the little hut was larger than it seemed from the outside. It was floored, and covered with a beautiful soft rug. There was a deep leather chair, a table, bookshelves, a divan, a fireplace. The walls were hung with rugs. Bronze sconces, attached to the walls, held candles. Walter lit two of them. They added a sparkle to the subdued light which found its way in through the window. He also touched a match to a pile of fragrant knots in the fireplace. The little scene became at once homelike and luxurious. There was even a piano—a grand piano in the far corner.

"Why the piano?" asked Iris, wonderingly, as her eyes strayed to it.

"Why not?" laughed Walter, in answer.

"But away up here!"

"Yes, I thought of Chopin at Majorca."

Iris flung herself down upon the divan and buried her face a moment in a cushion made of balsam needles.

"Walter, Walter, what are you—a magician?"

"Yes," said Walter, sitting down at the piano and fingering idly a few chords. "What do you want—ginger ale—eats—anything?"

"Oh, how good of you—but I'm not thirsty or hungry," answered Iris. "What a clear tone that piano has! And how *delicious* it sounds way up here on the mountaintop! I heard Bauer last winter—you know, in one of those hot, shiny concert halls."

"Yes, I know," said Walter.

"I was wishing——"

"I know that, too," he interrupted.

"Wouldn't it be grand, up here?"

"What did Bauer play?" asked Walter.

"Oh, different things. I remember the 'Liebestodt,' from 'Tristan'—Liszt's arrangement. It was wonderful."

"Wouldn't you like to hear it now?"

"Wouldn't I just! Why, if Bauer were here——"

Walter struck a low, ringing chord, then another. Iris listened a moment. Then she sprang to her feet, electrified. She darted across the room and seized Walter by the shoulders and stared down into his face.

"Walter! Don't tell me you can *play*!"

"Me? Why, haven't you heard me all summer?"

"No! I don't mean that at all. I mean really *play*! Oh, you *can*, you *can*!"

Walter looked up at her and smiled.

"Perhaps," he said.

"Why didn't you *ever* tell me?"

"I have only known you up here at camp—in the summers—and there was nothing but that tin pan of a thing to play on—and besides, I didn't know you cared."

She ran back and curled up among the cushions.

"Now begin!" she said, under her breath.

Walter began the "Liebestodt" over again and played. The light from the candles fell across him as he sat with his head bowed slightly. He did not once look up. He hardly moved. Even his hands seemed to be still as the music grew under his fingers like a cloud which seemed to spread out from the hut and envelop the mountaintop.

Little voices, like the voices of fairy goblins, raised their tiny melodies above the waves of sound—pleasant little goblins that winked at Iris and made her



smile, gentle little fairies that caressed her ears, hidden under her waving brown hair, and whispered to Iris memories of three summers that were gone, willful little sprites that coiled their beautiful fingers about Iris' heart, and hurt, and would not let go. The little hut became an enchanted cave. Iris, in her green sweater, was silent like some goddess charmed into jade. Her eyes flashed like jewels.

And so she sat and listened while Walter's music sang its way through her brain and heart, as he played many things to her, one after another, things of Grieg, Debussy, and Sibelius.

Iris' eyes were on the ground as Walter finished. She rose slowly, sighed, and came toward him. Then she flung herself with a little cry at his feet, put her arms across his lap, kneeling on the beautiful rug, her hair all awry, laid her head down and cried.

If that sounds theatrical or out of key, it wasn't so at all. It was what she felt. If you have ever seen tears in a tomboy's eyes you have seen tears that are real. Tomboys don't cry easily.

They went and sat down side by side on the divan.

"I said I wanted to tell you something about myself—" began Walter.

"You have told me already."

"Do you know that I want to marry you?"

"Yes. I know that now," said Iris. "You told me when you began to play."

"I meant," said Walter, "to tell you in just that way." He paused. "If we do marry," he went on, "we can go abroad, and I can study. I think I want to do that. Perhaps I could really play, some day."

"I should say you could! Why, Walter, Walter, you can *play now*. Don't you *know* it?"

Walter sat looking down and said nothing for a minute or two. "Of course," he began again, "we've both been abroad before. But Iris, you

know, it would be different! Just to live in some place—I think—that is—if you would—could—"

He broke off and looked at her a long time. Then he kissed her rather diffidently on the lips. He lifted her face and kissed her again.

"You *will* marry me—" he said, and waited.

She was very still and her eyes were shut. At last she nodded her head.

"I want to tell you something," she whispered.

"I know it. Did Bob—"

"Yes. And—he kissed me—once."

Walter laughed.

"Please don't laugh, Walter." A deep flush went over her face. "He—I couldn't help it—he kissed me more times than I can count."

"It makes you more interesting," said Walter quietly, kissing her more times than you could count. There is no essential difference between Bob and Walter when you get to this part of their love-making.

A little later Walter said, speaking from somewhere out of the middle of a great world brimming full of oceans of happiness, "I wonder—Bob ought to marry Dot. Don't you think he will? Well, maybe he will. He's such a—"

"Oh, don't I know it? Dot and I are crazy about Bob!"

"Aren't you crazy about me, now?"

"No. It's different. I *love* you!" said Iris.

"Is that our valley? Oh, it is!" exclaimed Iris, turning to look out of the window, and catching a glimpse of a vista under an arching hemlock branch.

"Yes. You can see it from this side of the summit."

"Play just once more before we go."

"All right," said Walter. "I suppose we *must* go!" Then he smiled and quoted:

"For love is of the valley,  
Come thou down."

"Indeed, it isn't," contradicted Iris. "It is away, high up—like this."

It was dark when they reached the foot of the trail. It had been dark, in fact, for some time and they nearly lost their way. But luck favored them.

"Here's the creek," Iris cried. "I hear it now. This way."

They crossed the creek successfully where the white, dry tops of the stones gleamed in the starlight above the black rush of the water. It was on the farther side that Walter slipped and gave a short cry.

"Oh, it's all right. Nothing. Just my ankle," he called ahead to Iris, in answer to her question. "In fact, it's splendid. It's a ready-made excuse. I've been wondering what we could say about being out so late. Now they will simply have to forgive us, and we don't have to lie, at all! We can just say I wrenched it up on the Terrace and took hours to come down. It is really wrenched, you know." Walter laughed at his own elaborate casuistry.

Twenty minutes later they hobbled into the clubhouse, Walter's hand bearing heavily on Iris' shoulder.

"Well, Iris!" said her mother, waiting at the door. "I was——"

"I know you were, mother, dear!"

But a shout of greeting interrupted them.

"Iris has brought him back, damaged!"

"Yes," admitted Walter, "I'm mortally wounded!"

Five girls and three boys cut off his shoe and, keeping up a fire of questions

as to how it happened, bound up the swollen ankle.

"How is it now?" they asked him.

"It doesn't hurt," laughed Walter.

The three boys carried Walter over to the old tin pan of a square piano.

"Now we'll dance to celebrate your rescue," they said.

And—after they had considerably brought him things to eat—they did.

Most love stories have an anticlimax something like this. So why care about it? Or attempt to change it? Real life goes right on just the same, anyway, in the same old undramatic fashion. People aren't going to stop and line up to sing a final chorus at an imaginary audience just because you and I agree to get married—especially when, as in Walter's and Iris' case, they don't know anything about it yet.

And so we take leave of Walter as he watches Iris and Bob dancing together, thumping obligingly away with his ragtime, and once in a while catching her eyes looking at him over Bob's shoulder.

"He's an awfully nice boy! I'm so sorry about his ankle," observed Miss Slithers to Mrs. Madison. "Of course, he's young and frightfully inartistic—just like a healthy boy. But he has some really good, solid qualities, and he'll develop."

"I wonder," remarked Mrs. Madison, "if these children ever get tired of doing things."

After the dancing was over, Walter took from his coat a sprig of balsam he had picked near the summit, and gave it, jokingly, to Dot to wear for him.



# Incidental

By Elizabeth Irons Folsom

Author of "A Layer of Good," "To Pass the Time," etc.

THE great room was shadowy, full of the smell of good tobacco, warm—at the far end, the rug had shafts of firelight across it.

One of the men there, spoke.

"So old Rod is back in the straight and narrow, and all is forgotten!"

"Yes. I just saw the reconciliation. Some dramatic scene, too. Gracia did it splendidly."

The third man of the group shifted his position and threw one leg over the pillowy arm of his chair.

"You talk like a pair of gossips. We've all talked so for months. This may be a man's club, but I'm hanged if we shouldn't all be drinking tea and knitting."

The first speaker crossed to the fire and stood looking down at the man in the chair.

"I'm just back home and I want to know what's been doing. When a fellow like Rod, whom we have known all our lives, gets in bad, I want to know why!" He turned to the other. "You tell me, as our friend here is too peeved to talk about it."

He lighted a fresh cigar and sat down on the couch where the light streamed; the man in the chair was in a shadow.

"It was this way," began the one appealed to. "Rod met this girl on his fifteenth wedding anniversary—old enough to know better, eh? She is a pretty thing; not many curves and the childish, wide-eyed look, you know. Hair straight back and black as coals. Her pose, not to giggle like the rest. She dances like an angel—you have to give it to her, she can dance! Hands

about as big as the claws of a canary; wrists and ankles like pipestems. That sort. Unusual. And Rod fell for it."

"Fell hard?"

"Hard! Well, I guess yes! Got out a brass band. Showed no sense at all."

"And Gracia?"

"You can imagine how Gracia would take a thing like that. Head up. No chance on earth for Rod. She couldn't see why, you know. She is the kind of woman who just couldn't see why. She lives with the single standard and all that. No sympathy. No excuse. Nothing but depravity in it. You know how she would take it."

"It got pretty bad, did it?"

"Rather! Rod came here to the club to live. Gracia went everywhere as white as—well, as white as a woman could be. She scorned rouge. The whole thing was talked about a lot because of their position, you know. It was a winner as a sensation!"

"Until when?"

"Right up to the present day, my boy. You are in at the death. We have taken our lives in our hands for weeks, talking to Rod. But upon my word, I don't believe he ever quite grasped what we were saying, he was so wrapped up in the situation. Talk went into one ear and out of the other. Then some one went to her."

"To Gracia?"

"No, to the girl. Our crusty friend here," indicating the man in the chair in the shadow, "will have to admit that the interview wasn't talked about. We don't know what argument was put up nor what the girl said—but she chucked him!"

"And peace descended"

"Not at once. Only to-day I went with Rod to Gracia, for the first time."

There was silence in the room. The visitor stretched his long length above the fire and waited. The huddled man in the big chair did not speak.

"I'm not going to be as discreet as the emissary to the girl," said the narrator with a laugh. "I'm going to say that Rod and Gracia ended the thing with all kinds of dignity. She came across the room—that big drawing-room of theirs, you know—and the sun streaked into her hair so it shone like gold. She held out her hand and Rod took it. As I cleared out, I looked back. He was kissing her. Well, we all feel—every one except Perk, here, and his grouch—that we have raised our family and may now enjoy ourselves again."

The guest laughed slightly.

"It won't really hurt them," he ventured.

"That's what I've been thinking," spoke the other eagerly. "It's just what Rod and Gracia needed. If you had seen her to-day, without her haughtiness—she was strong on that, you know—without her arrogance, and have seen Rod with a new sort of hushed look in his face, you would think, as I did, that the whole thing was ordained for their good. And, by Jove! I believe it was—so that two people could go through a crisis and come out stronger and more human. I tell you, I believe it was ordained."

"Ordained that he should meet that girl?"

"Oh—or some one. It doesn't make any difference about the particular girl. She was incidental."

The man in the puffy chair extracted himself. He came into the light.

"A little hard on the incidental," he said.

They looked at him.

"Rod is forty. Incidental is eighteen. Ordained for his good at her expense? I don't get it!"

The man who had done the talking shrugged his shoulders.

"Pooh!" he said brusquely. "She's not the kind to care."

"No— She killed herself to-night!"

"What?"

"I say she killed herself to-night."

The three men stood on the rug, silent for seven strokes of the clock.

"But—girls at eighteen—like her—don't do that thing!"

"This is done."

Again they stood silently.

"Of course, it doesn't matter. She was only a dancer. Events are pre-arranged so that certain people may be developed and certain others crushed en route. It's part of a scheme. But she didn't know that—then, you see. Little Incidental had no solid, well-fed bunch to stand back of her. It was all just a lit too rough for eighteen."

A door opened.

"Hush! Here's Rod."

The three men watched him as he walked the length of the long room. He was erect, tall, gray at his temples, his evening clothes perfection, his every motion casual, confident.

The man took his hat and coat from the arm of the stuffed chair.

"I'm going," he said, "to do every last, futile thing that can be done for Little Incidental."

He passed, unseeing, the outstretched hand of the newcomer who joined the others at the fire.

"What's the matter with Perk?" he asked.

"Oh—I don't know. Nothing, I guess."

Then they talked a bit haltingly, and went in to dinner.

# *The Qualities of Leadership*

By Caroline Lockhart

Author of "A Treasure of the Humble," "On East," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

**If you recall Miss Lockhart's earlier stories in SMITH'S, you will know exactly what a treat is offered you in these twelve pages.**

THE bishop of the diocese hinted that Upper Sage Creek was a little—er—"difficult" when he assigned that parish to Henry Bethly as his first charge after he had graduated and been duly ordained into the Episcopal ministry.

Rectors who had gone before had applied a more vigorous term in describing Upper Sage Creek, after their departure, but since it would serve no purpose to alarm a young and timid clergyman with harrowing experiences recounted by his predecessors, the bishop did not mention it. He added, as an afterthought, that if Mr. Bethly could obtain the cooperation of a certain Mrs. Rilla Rippetoe, four times widowed, who seemed to be a leader, his path would be much smoother.

The implication that Upper Sage Creek was no bed of roses served merely to put Mr. Bethly on his mettle. He was glad to hear that his first charge was—er—"difficult," because he could the sooner show the bishop the stuff that he was made of. Also, he decided that if he cooperated with anybody, it would be with Miss Ann Cowley who had promised, at some future date, to share his burdens and his honors in the Far West with him.

When Miss Cowley learned of the possible difficulties and of Mrs. Rippetoe, four times widowed, she agreed that nothing was to be gained by postponing their marriage.

Mr. Bethly congratulated himself as often as he was congratulated in having found an ideal helpmate. A member of an old and conservative family, Miss Cowley had seen enough of society to be tired of it, and, as a substitute, had devoted herself to settlement work in the slums of New York City.

They both reasoned that her experience among the Polish Jews should be invaluable in Wyoming and, combined with her social training, the two should make for wonderful results in that wild and barren country.

Miss Cowley told herself that undoubtedly there would be much that would be boresome in connection with her position as the wife of a clergyman in a Home Mission station—sitting through a round of tiresome dinners, returning the calls of mediocre women, listening to the small troubles of the inconsequential people who came to her for advice and guidance—but she would do her duty gracefully and sweetly.

She visualized herself carrying comfort and cup custards to the sick, spurring the worthy poor to further efforts, with timely words of encouragement, cheering the struggling ranchers by her visits, raising the tone of the community, and promoting sociability; and, most distinctly of all, she saw herself as a kind of oracle in the church societies, which position, she assumed, was now occupied by Mrs. Rippetoe.

With her education, tact, experience, and the qualities of leadership which she believed she possessed, she was sure that she would be instrumental in hastening the day when Henry would be given a charge worthy of his talents.

Of these visions she said little, which was fortunate, since nothing happened as she had planned it, save that she was properly married to Mr. Bethly and installed in the rectory on Upper Sage Creek.

As she stood at the kitchen sink washing dishes one morning, with her feet in pink satin mules and wearing a negligee of apricot satin, she was thinking hard of the difference between her dreams and the reality.

Not only had she not been bored with a round of tiresome dinners but their single invitation had come from a member who had issued it in much the same grim manner that she might have announced that she was devoting a day to calomel—unpleasant but necessary.

Instead of a succession of mediocre callers, dressed in their best as befitted the occasion, the few who came arrived via the alley, wearing their boudoir caps and wrappers. Nor did those who had troubles come to her secretly for advice and guidance. On the contrary, they screamed them from the rooftops, and seemed abundantly able to handle any situation, however unique or complicated.

The struggling ranchers seemed depressed rather than cheered by their pastoral visits and allowed Henry and herself to wait an interminable time, while the bees swarmed or they finished the milking. No one seemed ever to be ill on Upper Sage Creek, and the sole recipient of one of her cup custards, who was thrown from his horse while intoxicated, complained openly and bitterly of a lack of sweetening. The worthy poor did not need spurring and resented her well-meant

words of encouragement, while the at home she attempted, for the purpose of promoting sociability, was attended only by the milkwoman who mistook her stylish tea wagon for a new-fangled baby carriage. And in the church societies where she had expected to shine she was but a phantom beside the flamboyant personality of Mrs. Rilla Rippetoe.

Not the least of her grievances was the attitude of the Upper Sage Creekers toward her husband. Instead of the deference which it was customary to show a clergyman in the circle she had so recently vacated, he seemed to be regarded with amused tolerance, an air that said plainly: "Oh, well, if he doesn't do any good, he can't hurt anybody!"

Mrs. Bethly was correct in her premises, for the Upper Sage Creekers had seen too many rectors arrive, full of zeal and vigor, and watched them pass, hopeless and broken-spirited, to be excited or impressed by the coming of a new one. In fact, there were experts who declared they could tell the length of time a rector had been there by hearing the church bell ring on Sunday morning. For the first few months it was loud, defiant almost, but subsided gradually until it became only a faint tap of the clapper.

If he was unmarried he lasted longer, for, in that event, he dined out oftener, but in the end he departed, thin to gauntness, with the lifeless, fishy eye and springless step that comes from a continued diet of breakfast foods.

There was small danger, however, that this unpleasant condition could come to the Bethlys, or that Mr. Bethly, who was plump, would ever so remotely resemble an India famine sufferer, for Mrs. Bethly had her own income which she applied to their living expenses. Also, she could very well afford the servant she was so desperately in need of, had she been able to





Mrs. Bethly made her choice in a kind of desperation. Better to lose her jewels and wedding silver than to continue in such slavery!

get one. The few who had inquired had stared at her stonily after she had interviewed them and, going away with the vague statement that "they would let her know," were never again heard from. For this reason chiefly, though the disheartening facts previously mentioned were contributory, Mrs. Bethly one morning fell to weeping into the dishpan, clouding her double-lens glasses, and splashing an occasional tear on the apricot satin.

It has been said that no real lady

cries out loud, but it was a man who said it, so there is a chance that he may not have known what he was talking about. In any event, Mrs. Bethly was weeping so audibly that a rap on the screen door was repeated several times before she heard it.

For a moment she was filled with consternation, yet she told herself that she must go to the door or else in half an hour the report would be current that Henry had been beating her.

Instead of a neighbor, looking with

avid curiosity at her red eyelids and highly polished nose, there was a girl on the other side who was so unmistakably a servant that Mrs. Bethly all but screamed at her.

"Do you want a situation?"

"Yeth, ma'am," she lisped promptly.

"Who sent you?"

"Mithith Rippetoe."

"Oh!" replied Mrs. Bethly flatly.

When she had asked Mrs. Rippetoe to recommend a servant that lady had replied flippantly that "they didn't grow servants in Wyoming." Also, she had been looking for kitchen help herself so Mrs. Bethly was reluctantly obliged to admit that this was generous of her.

"What kind of work have you been doing?"

"I wath chambermaid in a hotel."

"Where?"

"Thioux Thity."

"You have references?"

The girl shook her head and Mrs. Bethly looked dubious. She might be a thief; she might be an improper character; she might be anything except what she appeared, which was a strong, capable domestic. She had the fair hair, clear skin, and vivid blue eyes of the Scandinavian, with the thick waist, broad feet, and red hands of the working class of her country. Her face was expressionless, but this and the cowl-like placidity of her manner, appealed to Mrs. Bethly, who was prejudiced against emotional servants.

"Does Mrs. Rippetoe know you?"

"I cooked in an eatin' house where she waited table."

"Oh!" Mrs. Bethly lifted her eyebrows at this revelation concerning the past of the local society leader. Then she glanced at the kitchen sink and a pile of soiled plates towering like a monument; at the floor where Henry had observed that skating would soon be excellent; at the basket full of laundry, and she made her choice in a kind of desperation.

Better to lose her jewels and their wedding silver than to continue in such slavery! She remembered, too, an impending visit from the bishop and asked her:

"Where's your trunk?"

"Here ith." The girl touched a newspaper bundle.

"What's your name?"

She hesitated, but answered:

"Hulda Thwanson."

"We'll try it and see how we get on together, Hulda. Your room is at the head of this stairway."

Mrs. Bethly listened to the sound of her heavy feet clumping over the floor and thrilled to it as she never had thrilled to the rarest music, even while she marveled again at the unnatural magnanimity of Mrs. Rippetoe. Perhaps Hulda broke china, perhaps she was given to drink or staying out nights, perhaps—immediately she reproached herself for these dark suspicions of the woman's generosity. Whatever the girl's shortcomings might be, she determined to put up with them until the bishop's visit was over.

Some two hours later she went into the kitchen and thrilled again at the transformation. The dishes were in orderly piles on clean shelf papers; the rim which had marked the highest tide was scoured from the enameled sink; it was possible to cross the floor without slipping; the napkins embroidered with her monogram, which Mrs. Bethly had used for towels, were soaking; and preparations were under way for blackening a stove that the most polite person would have had to concede needed it.

It was Mrs. Bethly's theory that too much praise spoiled servants, but she permitted herself a few discreet words of commendation. They appeared to be wasted, however, for there was no change in the absent-minded look in Hulda's eyes to indicate that she had heard them. As silent as a deaf-mute,

so far as speech went, the girl accomplished wonders in the way of work and, as the day wore on, Mrs. Bethly asked herself if, at last, and on Upper Sage Creek, she had found the perfect servant.

It was at four o'clock, when the girl appeared before her dressed for the street, that Mrs. Bethly discovered that her new-found jewel was not flawless.

"I'm goin' to the potht offith," she announced calmly.

"You should have asked me, Hulda," Mrs. Bethly reminded her. "You may go this time, however."

The next day, and at the same hour exactly, the girl appeared in her hat and jacket.

"I'm goin' to the potht offith."

"Don't you intend to obey me in this matter, Hulda?" Mrs. Bethly demanded in quick anger.

"I'm goin' to the potht offith," the girl reiterated stolidly.

There was no impertinence in her tone or manner, yet her obstinacy exasperated Mrs. Bethly to a point where it was on the end of her tongue to tell her that she need not return if she persisted in going. Just in time she remembered the bishop and that she was in no position to issue ultimatums until his visit was over.

"Very well," she replied coldly since there was no other answer.

A daily journey to the post office was Hulda's one idiosyncrasy, aside from sitting in her stocking feet in the kitchen on the plea that her feet swelled in warm weather, and while Mrs. Bethly did not become resigned to her disobedience, she was at least able to refrain from making any reply when the girl made the daily announcement.

In all weather, however disagreeable, Hulda was at the general-delivery window as soon as it opened, with the same inquiry:

"Ith a letter for Hulda Thwanson?"

If ever she received one, Mrs. Bethly

did not see it, for always she returned empty-handed and wooden-visaged.

Now that she had ample leisure, Mrs. Bethly determined to renew the battle for supremacy in church and social circles. The keen edge of her gratitude to Mrs. Rippetoe for her unheard-of sacrifice had worn off quickly and she remembered chiefly how she had been talked down and overruled in the guild meetings by that impossible person.

Mrs. Rippetoe was a harpoon rather than a thorn in the flesh of Mrs. Bethly and she concluded that the most effectual way to eliminate her was to overawe and suppress her. In the local phraseology, if she could but once publicly "buffalo" the vital Mrs. Rilla Rippetoe, the rest would be easy; nor should it be such a task, once she set about it in earnest, for the woman had no real wit or cleverness, no social training; she was merely loud and vulgarly vital, retaining the leadership because nobody had tried seriously to take it from her.

The more she thought of it the more preposterous it seemed that she, born Ann Cowley, should continue to play second fiddle to Mrs. Rilla Rippetoe, who had "waited table;" and she meant not to do it any longer. She was no worm if she *was* a minister's wife! Mrs. Bethly's eyes gleamed through her double-lens glasses quite as though she had been accused of it.

In the bishop's visit she saw her opportunity. She remarked casually to her husband:

"When the bishop comes, I think I shall give a reception."

"An excellent idea," Mr. Bethly agreed heartily. "Why don't you get Mrs. Rippetoe to help you? She seems so popular."

Without being sure, Henry had an uncomfortable feeling that he had "said something."

It became a kind of obsession with

her—this reception—and the day the bishop's letter was received, setting the exact date of his arrival, Mrs. Bethly was more excited over it than by any event since her marriage.

Immediately she sent out her invitations and the flutter they caused was all she had anticipated. It had been many a long day since Upper Sage Creek had had occasion to take its clothes out of moth balls.

In her own house, fortified by the prestige of the bishop's presence, with a nearly perfect servant, Mrs. Bethly felt that she could await the result with entire equanimity. Every condition was favorable to impress, once and for all, these crude and unimpressible people with the fact that she and Henry were their rightful leaders and, incidentally, to suggest to the bishop that Upper Sage Creek was not—er—"difficult" when tactfully handled, but was too small a field for Henry's talents.

While she made her preparations, or more exactly, Hulda did, under her direction, her subconscious mind was occupied with the part she was to play in the evening's entertainment. Next to the bishop, she saw herself as the central figure—a gracious hostess yet, subtly and without offense, conveying the impression that there was, after all, class distinction.

Like a great lady unbending, she would move among them with a smile for all and pleasant words distributed impartially, to put them at their ease. It was inevitable that they must depart with the feeling that it was a benefit and a privilege to spend an evening in an atmosphere of such culture and refinement.

Past failures were forgotten in visions of her coming triumph and it was only when thoughts of Mrs. Rilla Rippetoe intruded that her face hardened. Sensations of which a minister's wife is presumed to be incapable filled her at such moments, and she tingled

with eagerness to witness the discomfiture of the widow when she found herself so distinctly out of her element.

Her plans worked out with almost uncanny smoothness. The carnations came from the nearest city in perfect condition; the mayonnaise dressing did not "lump," and the cake was indeed food for the angels. The only annoyance she experienced was Hulda's persistence in going to the post office, as usual, on the afternoon of the reception.

"Can't you postpone it one day?" she demanded.

"I'm goin' to the potht offith," the girl replied mulishly.

Further acquaintance had not loosened Hulda's tongue or made for a greater intimacy. There was something unnatural about her silence. She never spoke unless spoken to and her answers were laconic to curtness. When Henry had mentioned her reticence, Mrs. Bethly had replied that it suited her perfectly since she wanted a servant, not a companion. At the moment, she was thinking of Mrs. Rippetoe, who told with gusto that on washdays she ate with the colored laundress on the kitchen table.

Watching Hulda return from the post office, slow and heavy-footed, Mrs. Bethly could not refrain from saying:

"You would as well have done as I asked—I see you didn't get anything."

Did the girl wince, or was it her imagination? She looked after her, thinking how clumsy she was and how awkward of appearance, how leaden-footed and big-handed. She was just a well-trained animal, was Hulda, an emotionless clod, incapable of affection or gratitude or sorrow. Anyway, she numbered her among her mercies for her capabilities.

Mrs. Bethly had reason again to be thankful for Hulda when she took a final survey before the first guest might be expected. The rectory from top to

bottom was the last word in good house-keeping. The cut glass and wedding silver were shining, and every knob and utensil that would take a polish had it. Hulda, too, in her white cap and frilled apron, was all that the most fastidious mistress would have had her. Yes, she thought, she had ample reason to congratulate herself upon Hulda.

Henry looked every inch the in-

affair which there was every reason to believe would pass off without a hitch or awkward moment, and Mrs. Bethly was filled with a benign complacency such as she had not experienced since she had visited among the Polish Jews in New York City.

Mrs. Rilla Rippetoe was one of the first to ring the doorbell. She came early and meant to stay late so that



She screamed her witticisms, punctuating them with bursts of laughter, while she flounced and bounced, radiating vitality like a human dynamo.

tellectual aristocrat, while the bishop, charming and distingué, would have been an asset to any hostess. The expression on Mrs. Bethly's face as she regarded herself in the mirror, before descending, could not be called dissatisfaction, and it passed through her mind that she hoped the ladies of Upper Sage Creek were sufficiently discerning to note that her delicate, gray gown was hand, not machine, embroidered.

The setting was perfect for a social

she might extract all possible enjoyment from the occasion.

"Hello, Hulda! How are you?"

If there was any difference in the warmth with which Mrs. Rippetoe greeted her maid and the cordiality of her tone to herself, Mrs. Bethly could not detect it. Like the squawk of a parakeet, her voice had the volume of a calliope, Mrs. Bethly thought shudderingly as she welcomed her.

"Hello, bishop!" Mrs. Rippetoe waved her hand genially at that digni-

tary and with a familiarity which bespoke a lifelong acquaintance. It was obvious that the widow was in high spirits, and that mood, her critics averred, was something to be dreaded.

In a purple satin décolleté, with manaclelike bracelets on her not-too-slender wrists, painted like a coryphée, her bleached hair dressed like that of an Albino princess of the circus, drenched with perfume, the oft-be-reaved Mrs. Rippetoe was more than usually terrible. And when, after a hearty handshake all around, she sat down on the divan and crossed her knees, even the poise of the bishop was not proof against some slight nervousness.

Any magnanimous thoughts Mrs. Bethly may have had of putting Mrs. Rippetoe at her ease, after she had cowed and suppressed her sufficiently, vanished promptly. It was impossible to imagine a person less in need of it.

She screamed her witticisms, punctuating them with bursts of laughter, suggesting the merriment of a plantation darkey, while she flounced and bounced, radiating vitality like a human dynamo.

She addressed her conversation impersonally to the gathering, the bishop sharing her attention equally with the paper hanger, who was a communicant and sang in the choir and had to be asked, in consequence.

The milkwoman, who had not been invited, arrived in tennis shoes and a yachting cap. It developed to Mrs. Bethly's intense annoyance, that Mrs. Rippetoe had told her to come anyhow, since a reception to the bishop was more or less public.

By the time the guests were assembled and Mrs. Bethly's duties in the reception hall ended, she found herself practically relegated to the back-ground and Mrs. Rippetoe holding the center of the stage like the burlesque queen she so much resembled.

She tried to make herself felt, but

all her poise, her social manner, her refinement, and the gay gown with the hand embroidery, were as nothing, within the radius of the irrepressible widow's personality.

"She keeps things going, doesn't she?" Mr. Bethly whispered, grinning. "Like a clown!" replied Mrs. Bethly viciously.

Mr. Bethly looked at her wonderingly and went in to listen to Mrs. Rippetoe, who was preparing to sing one of the "coon songs" in which she specialized.

Since Mrs. Bethly had no taste to become one of her rapt audience, the only alternative was to talk to the wife of the undertaker, who looked lonesome in the study.

"I am not on speakin' terms with her," said that lady, nodding toward the piano, which Mrs. Rippetoe was pounding with all her vigor. "We fell out over the bill when her fourth husband died on her." She added reminiscently: "She can make it hot for you, if she don't like you!"

Mrs. Bethly could not remember when she had had such a nearly uncontrollable desire to be spiteful. It took all her will power to say merely:

"She seems to have a large following."

Thinking bitterly that she would not be missed, and to remove herself from the temptation of discussing Mrs. Rippetoe, she went out to look after Hulda. She would not make any further attempt to compete with such a vulgar creature; she would go into her shell and stay there; she was surprised at the bishop! What was the secret of the woman's attraction, anyhow? These things and others she was thinking as she opened the door to find an empty kitchen.

The fire was burning, the coffee steaming, and every preparation for serving the refreshments was completed, but the girl herself was missing.



She called into the darkness of the backyard:

"Hulda!"

Down the cellar stairway:

"Hulda, where are you?"

She listened for her heavy tread in the servant's room above the kitchen—but silence.

Behind the door the poor brown jacket and cheap sailor were on their nails as usual.

Was it possible that the stupid was sleeping?

Opening the door of the back stairway, she called sharply:

"Are you there?"

No answer.

Bewildered, Mrs. Bethly stood and reflected.

The girl never visited the neighbors; she was too faithful to leave without notice; she was too phlegmatic to kill herself. Where *was* she! She had appeared tired after dinner, Mrs. Bethly now remembered, a pinched look about the nostrils, and her mouth had a set expression that was not usual. Yes, she must be sleeping.

Mrs. Bethly lifted the front of her skirt and ran up the stairway. The door of the room was closed and a curious sound was coming from the other side of it. It was like the staccato note of a castanet or some one snapping his thumb and finger smartly. Perhaps she was crazy—Swedes lost their balance easily, she had heard somewhere.

Other than the sound of the finger-snapping there was not a whisper. Mrs. Bethly laid her hand on the knob and turned it cautiously.

"What's the matter, Hulda?" she asked sharply.

The girl rolled her head on the pillow and looked at her wildly.

"I'm thick," she panted.

Just for a second Mrs. Bethly stood there, then she turned and ran as fast as her feet would carry her. In-

stinctively, it was Mrs. Rippetoe to whom she beckoned in her excitement, and, after a whispered word, the two flew up the stairs together. Mr. Bethly, who started to follow, heard himself screamed at and told to stay where he was in a most peremptory fashion, while the mystified guests stared at each other wonderingly and waited in silence to be enlightened.

The bishop did his best to keep the conversation going but his efforts were useless for the guests were too frankly curious as to what was transpiring to make any pretense of interest. They knew that whatever Mrs. Rippetoe's faults, an abnormal secretiveness was not among them and that she would inform them shortly.

In this they were not mistaken. She bounded down the stairs and stood in the doorway, where she announced in a voice which sounded as if it came through a megaphone:

"Hulda has a baby, folks, so you'll have to get your own refreshments. Hank," addressing her pastor, "phone for a nurse and doctor."

As there are situations unsuited to a minister's son so it was plainly no place for a bishop, and he packed his bag and went to the hotel with all celerity while the guests, their appetites unimpaired by the embarrassment which they declared overwhelmed them, did as Mrs. Rippetoe suggested and awaited further details.

When none were forthcoming, and the salad and sandwiches were exhausted, they set out gayly to spread the tidings, which they did so efficaciously that by seven-thirty the next morning the passers-by were gazing at the house in the round-eyed wonder with which the morbid stare at a spot where murder has been committed. And Mrs. Bethly, whose tears had moistened the shoulder of Mr. Bethly's pajama jacket all night long, writhed with the disgrace of it—quite as though



"You like him—you love him, don't you, Hulda? Tell me why, when he has been so mean to you?"

she herself had had a child born out of wedlock.

The question as to the position the minister's wife would take in the matter had precedent of all others. Would she stand by Hulda or would she dismiss her as soon as she had recovered? Mrs. Bethly was on trial in Upper Sage Creek, though she did not know it. They arrived in droves immediately after breakfast and interrogated Mrs. Rippetoe who was presumed to have inside information.

"She'll do the right thing—you may be sure of it," declared that person—which really was no answer when one considered it, since the "right thing" depended upon the angle from which one viewed it, and there might be those who held that it would be infamous to

have the rectory polluted by the girl's continued presence.

It was eleven o'clock before Mrs. Rippetoe, having finished her housework, picked her way up the alley, wearing her boudoir cap and a flowered kimono.

"How's the baby?" she asked, as she bounced into the study, which was redolent of the aromatic spirits of ammonia that Mrs. Bethly had been sniffing.

"I haven't been up," she replied from the sofa where she was reclining.

"I heard it squawking," said Mr. Bethly stiffly.

Mrs. Rippetoe's shrewd little eyes narrowed and she looked from one to the other oddly. Then she said urgently:

"Come on, let's go and talk to her."

"You might as well go, my dear, and have it over," Mr. Bethly advised his wife as she hesitated.

Mrs. Rippetoe scampered up the stairs ahead of her and ran into the room without knocking.

"Ain't it the cutest *ever!*" she squealed ecstatically.

The girl lifted pleased, grateful eyes to Mrs. Rippetoe's face and drew a little red something that looked like a shriveled baked apple, closer.

"Hulda, I came up to hear the truth about this matter." Mrs. Bethly's mouth was set in a line of firmness.

A frightened look came into the white, drawn face on the pillow.

"I'm thorry—I meant to go away before—I didn't expect—" the girl stammered as she picked nervously at the counterpane.

"Perhaps we'd better not worry her," Mrs. Rippetoe suggested, once again looking at Mrs. Bethly oddly.

"Not *worry* her! She *ought* to be worried after the imposition she has practiced upon me. She doesn't deserve the slightest consideration, but, if she will tell me the truth, Henry and I have decided we will do what we can for her in the way of making the child's father share the responsibility. Who is he? You *must* tell me!"

"He wuth a chocolate drummer," the girl replied finally. "He came to the hotel where I worked in Iowa. He thaid if I would go to Thiox Thity he would marry me. Tho I went. Then he thaid he wathn't ready—he wath too poor yet. I let him have my money—two hundred and fifty dollars. He thaid for me to go to work again and he would thend for me. I came here becauth I knew Mithith Rippetoe, but I meant to go away before—honest, ma'am, I didn't mean to bother you. And he thaid—he promithed—"

"Never mind," Mrs. Bethly interrupted. "It's a sordid and disgusting

story and I don't want to hear any more of it. I only want to know his name and the name of the firm he works for."

The girl lowered her eyelids and was silent.

"Why don't you answer, Hulda?" Mrs. Bethly demanded.

"I don't want to put him in trouble."

Mrs. Bethly cried incredulously: "You *refuse*—after the way he has treated you!"

Hulda did not answer, but her face took on the expression it wore whenever she announced that she was going to the post office.

Mrs. Rippetoe stooped to this juncture and, lifting a wisp of fair hair from the girl's clammy forehead, said gently:

"You *like* him—you *love* him, don't you, Hulda? Tell me why, when he has been so mean to you?"

For answer the girl slipped her hand under the pillow and took out a picture, bent on the corners, and smeared with much kissing. Her eyes sparkled, blazed fairly, with the look of pride and adoration that leaped into them as she gazed at it—a dapper, full-length figure, with the vain, pretty face of a clothing advertisement. Then her face crumpled as she passed it over, and the tears that all her agony could not bring rushed to her eyes as she wailed despairingly:

"He wath thuch a *thwell* man, Mithith Rippetoe!"

His wife's shrill exclamation of horror brought Mr. Bethly to the foot of the stairs in time to hear her say in a tone of imperious finality:

"Out you go, you wretched creature! Not next week or to-morrow, either, but as soon as we can get a stretcher and some one to carry you! You are depraved and shameless!"

Mrs. Rippetoe asked in a tone that was ominously quiet as she turned to her:

"You mean that, Mis' Bethly?"

"Most certainly!" A red spot flamed on either sallow cheek and her voice vibrated with the emphasis she put in the answer.

Mrs. Rippetoe straightened and walked up to her. The very ribbons on her cap stood out belligerently—they looked like horns somehow—as she faced her.

"I felt I was right about you: I'd'a bet I had your number. I thought you didn't have a heart in you any bigger than a bullet when I first seen you, but I was ready to keep my claws off you until I was sure of it. You're just a cold, narrow, little snob and nothin' would ever make you any different. You come out here and pay calls as if you were slummin'. You think it's a privilege for some dog-tired rancher's wife to cook a meal for you. You entertain more to 'show us somethin'' than because you want to know us. You'd like to run the church societies

and things, generally, but you haven't got the makin's of a leader in spite of the social trainin' that I've heard you mention so frequent! All the social trainin' I ever got was shootin' biscuits in a Harvey's Eatin' House, but I've wrangled around considerable and I've noticed that it takes more than social trainin' to be a leader. It takes kindness of heart, along with courage, whether it's in a city or Upper Sage Creek. You're done for in this community! I'm meaner than sin when I get started, and I'm goin' to take Hulda home with me and blab this all over town as fast as my legs can carry me!"

She hesitated, partly from lack of breath but mostly because she was struggling to keep her tongue from some further indiscretion. But the temptation was too much for her, and she yelled at the wife of her pastor:

"I knew about Hulda when I sent her. I wanted to try you, and I framed this up on you, Mis' Bethly!"

## THE ROSE OF DAY

NIGHT, wandering in his garden  
 And plucking silvery stars,  
 Roamed far beyond the moon-flecked way  
 To peer through dawn's gray bars.  
 He saw a wondrous maiden  
 In softly clinging gown,  
 With dreamy eyes of azure  
 And opal-studded crown.  
 Night spoke: "Your name, fair maiden?"  
 "It's Dawn," she answered mild.  
 "I love you!" breathed the jeweled night.  
 "And I love you!" she smiled.  
 Then, with the moon, a silver ring,  
 Night did the young Dawn wed.  
 He kissed the bud—until she grew  
 Into a rose of red.  
 Then, smiling still, her heart she oped,  
 Its gold flashed through the gray.  
 And so the bud of early dawn,  
 Became the rose of day.

AGNES LOCKHART HUGHES.

# Wings

By Kay Cleaver Strahan

Author of "The Dimity Dress," "A Watcher of the Skies," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

Delightfully whimsical—a boarding-house story with a "difference."

I HAVE come to inquire, Mrs. Haddy," Phineas Tettigrew addressed his unsmiling landlady smilingly, "whether you can tell me the reason why the young lady, to whom you have rented the apartment adjoining mine, never sings?"

"Lands alive! Mr. Tettigrew, don't she? Must be she ain't got a singing voice."

"Youth," pronounced Mr. Tettigrew, "has always a singing voice. She is young. She has been here several days. I hear her going about her maidently little tasks, but never do I hear her voice raised in song. I hear——"

"I'm sure," interrupted Mrs. Haddy, "that ain't my fault. So long as she keeps paid up I can't go tell her to sing, if that's what you mean."

Mr. Tettigrew's eyes, clear blue and as dream-filled as a tired child's, blinked perplexedly behind the large spectacles. "It was not what I meant," he explained. "However, by observing her, conversing with her, I may be able to reach a solution of our problem. With your permission, I shall take my place at the small table, where she sits, for dinner this evening. I trust it may cause you no inconvenience?"

"Don't mention it," urged Mrs. Haddy, but it was merely her usual formula. She hated changes of any sort and her introduction that evening, "Miss Bradley, meet Mr. Tettigrew," was choleric.

"Do you know," began Mr. Tetti-

grew, when he had placed Miss Bradley's chair and taken his opposite her, "a surname seems to me to be of but little significance. I wonder whether you will gratify an old man's curiosity and tell me the name that your parents gave to you?"

"My name is Alicia." The direct simplicity of her words atoned in a measure for their lack of cordiality.

"Ah, Alicia is a beautiful name! It means princess, does it not?"

"I don't know."

Accustomed to boarding-house garulousnesses interminable, Mr. Tettigrew found a sort of acidulated refreshment in this girl's tart finalities.

He glanced across at her and decided, though he disliked the admission, that she was not beautiful. But he put her in a spring-sweet orchard, foaming with blossoms, and let the sun, seeping through the blossoms and the perfume and the bees' drone, glint that fine, fair hair of hers.

"Here come the others." Alicia's crisp voice startled him into the consciousness that for some seconds she had been returning his scrutiny. "Will you tell me their names? That Mrs. Haddy mumbles so, and I'm not good at names, anyway."

"The tall young man," Mr. Tettigrew concurred, "is John Raven. You can, perhaps, remember his name by likening his black hair to a raven's wing. The lad's name is Oliver Atwood, and the little lady is Tessie

Gaum. She is a manicurist by profession and a merry-maker by avocation. Now let me see——"

But before he had succeeded in linking their names with further retentatives the trio arrived and, after exclamatory greetings for Phineas, they resumed a conversation which had been begun before they had come into the dining room.

John Raven soon drew an evening paper from his pocket and read. Alicia continued with her dinner. Phineas marveled at her ability for detachment. It had no tinge of circumspect aloofness, no savor of sedulous dignity; she was, simply, quite alone. Could that, he wondered, be one reason for the outwardness of those gray eyes of hers? Deepen them with an interest, soften them with a dream, and add a curve of purpose to the mouth and chin and you would have, he determined, a madonna.

Tessie, just then, giggled a period to her conversation with Mr. Atwood and turned to Alicia.

"What's your line of business, may I ask, Miss Bradley?"

"I'm in the hardware at Saterlee's," Alicia answered.

"I've thought of trying clerking," Tessie confided, "but if I did, I'd rather be in the silks or something, wouldn't you? I'd think pots and Kettles and stuff like that'd be awful dull."

"Oh, of course," Alicia agreed.

"Dull," expostulated Phineas, "but my dear children! What could be more interesting, more romantic than the utensils you mention?"

"Interesting? Romantic?" giggled Tessie.

Phineas leaned forward, eagerly in earnest.

"The fashioning of vessels in which man could cook his food was, I may say, next, of course, to the discovery of fire, the most important step in the forward march of civilization. Begin-

ning with the sun-dried clay of Mesopotamia——"

"Oh," urged Tessie, "cut the ancient history and tell us the romance."

"Tessie," teased Oliver, "is the one who put the man in romance. Tell her about the kettle the bride cooks the wedding breakfast in."

"Or," smiled John Raven, "about the frying pan which the Bill Hart man takes with him into the wilderness, seeking gold, founding empires—that sort of thing."

"Splendid!" approved Mr. Tettigrew. "And now, Miss Alicia," he turned to her, "we are waiting for your contribution to the romance of hardware, since you know more about it than any one of us knows."

"I may know about hardware," Alicia folded her napkin, "but I don't know about romance. I don't believe in it."

She rose from the table.

"Stiffish, ugh?" said Tessie, as Alicia walked away.

"Shy, perhaps," suggested John.

"Ah," Mr. Tettigrew sighed, as he followed Alicia out of the room, "perhaps I am beginning to understand."

On the stairs he met Mrs. Haddy coming down, bumping a huge bag of laundry behind her. "Would you wish," she accosted him, "to take your right place for breakfast?"

"Thank you, but I believe I shall remain at the small table for some time because, do you know," he lowered his voice in the confidence, "I gravely fear that our young friend may be a kiwi-kiwi bird."

"Lands alive!" said Mrs. Haddy.

"Perhaps," elucidated Mr. Tettigrew, "you may have heard of it only by its more technical name of apteryx. It is, as you will remember, a wingless bird, found in New Zealand; a bird that lives on the ground. It does not, I believe, sing. And why," he questioned, "why should it? Why, indeed, when it lives on the ground and is wingless?"





"My mother had two husbands before she died, and I saw plenty of your romance and love when I was little."

"Lands alive!" said Mrs. Haddy and escaped down the stairs.

In his room, Phineas drew a chair to the window and sat gazing across dull roofs into the supreme, luminous blue of the early night sky before he turned to his desk, piled high with folded papers.

The following evening when Alicia,

instead of going to her room after dinner, stepped out on the porch, Phineas followed her.

"I have been thinking," he began at once, "of what you said last night; that you did not believe in romance. But, of course, you did not mean that."

"Yes, I did," she contradicted, and added, "Who does?"

"Every one in the world."

"Then, I don't know any one in the world."

"That," he agreed gravely, "may possibly be."

He had intended a challenge, but she did not accept it.

"You see," he went on, "in excluding romance, you exclude so much of love."

"I know," she answered placidly, "but I don't believe in love, either. I tell you," she raised her head and Phineas saw for the first time her possibilities of animation, "there is nothing in it. My mother had two husbands before she died, and I saw plenty of your romance and love when I was little. I'll stick to a good job, thank you!"

Phineas passed a hand through his white pompadour.

"I suppose," he suggested, "that your ambition is for a successful business career; that you hope to rise to a position of manager, or buyer."

"A fine big chance of that!"

"But dear child"—Mr. Tettigrew made it supplicatory—"what, then, is your vision?"

"My vision," she questioned and repeated, "My vision? Why—I haven't any."

"You mean that you have no desires for anything different from what you now have?"

"I'd like a million dollars, but I don't spend my time imagining that I'm going to get it."

"A million dollars," repeated Phineas, rather as she had repeated his words a moment before, "a million dollars. Only, you know, with a million dollars you couldn't buy love, nor the joy of duty, nor—bless my soul," his voice rose high in a sudden astonishment, "what could one buy with a million dollars?"

"Limousines," she informed him, "and sables."

"And you," he questioned, "believe in those things?"

"Believe in them? I see them every day."

"Ah, but you see, too, every day, the things which you say you do not believe in."

"I don't see them," she denied, "I see through them. For instance, if you can see romance in the way that Miss What's-her-name, at our table, tries to flirt with Mr. Raven, I can't."

"No," Phineas answered, examining a worn place on his shoe, "I should call that an effort of friendliness toward an unhappy and lonely stranger."

"What's the matter with him? Is he out of work?"

"No, he has a fairly good position in a newspaper office. Odd," Mr. Tettigrew continued musingly, "very odd, that you, of all people, should have come to this particular house to live. Because, do you know, I think I may safely say that there is not a home in this city which teems with mystery and tragedy, and—yes, with romance, as does this old house on Raffell Street."

"Mystery?" questioned Alicia. "Tragedy?"

"For example," said Mr. Tettigrew, "Mrs. Haddy was once a reigning belle in a California mining town."

Alicia listened while he told her, in detail, of Mrs. Haddy's most romantic love affair which had finally led to her rejection of a wealthy man and her acceptance of Charles Haddy.

"I doubt that story like the dickens," said Alicia.

"The fault," sighed Phineas, "is in the way I told it."

"A million dollars for a Charlie Haddy! Lord help us!" said Alicia.

"And Tessie," went on Mr. Tettigrew, disregarding her exclamation, "Tessie, who seems so frivolous——"

"Don't try to tell me that she has renounced a fortune!"

"No," agreed Phineas, "she is merely working hard, saving her pennies, and trying to save more so that she and

her sweetheart, who was blinded in France, may be married."

"Oh!" said Alice, but her brows contracted and her lips compressed for an instant.

"But," she argued in the next instant, "I thought that Mr. Atwood was crazy about her."

"I think," assented Phineas, "that Oliver is in love with her—deeply, hopelessly in love—and has been for years. Except for that love I doubt whether he would have had the strength to do as he did when, a few months ago, to save a friend from disgrace, he gave that friend every cent of his many years' savings, and——"

"My word!" interposed Alicia, "isn't there a person in this boarding house who isn't a hero or heroine in disguise?"

"Not in this boarding house and not, I believe, in the world," answered Mr. Tettigrew.

"Anyway," said Alicia, "the people who live here don't hide their lights under bushels, do they?"

"No," Mr. Tettigrew gravely agreed, "perhaps not. Certainly my friends have allowed me, occasionally, to enjoy the beams. I do not feel that I have violated any trust in telling you what I have, but I do ask that, until our friends shall have given you their confidences, you will assume that they are unknown to you. I should greatly dislike to be known as a talebearer."

"Of course," Alicia acquiesced, "they'll never know that I know a thing. And now, what is Mr. Raven's calcium?"

"That," sighed Phineas, "I fear I may not tell you. His confidence is a secret which involves life and death."

"Whew——" Alicia whistled it, then said, "But, do you know, I thought that he was different and kind of interesting."

"He is," Mr. Tettigrew assured her. "Too, he has need of friends, and I have no doubt that, considering his in-

terest in you, when he discovers your interest in him, he will tell you his tragedy."

"I'm not interested in him," Alicia denied, "and he's not interested in me."

Phineas was possessed of far too much wisdom to raise an argument over her first assertion, but to her second he took grave exception and to his delight found Alicia not unwilling to pursue the discussion. Finally, indeed, it was he who, warned by the rheumatic dangers in the chill of the late evening, got to his feet with a, "Well, well, we shall see."

A knowledge of human nature was one of Mr. Tettigrew's few prides, so the ensuing weeks, colorless and uneventful as they were, formed for him a sort of rainbowed path over which he rode in a chariot composed of his own triumphs.

The Sunday afternoons when Alicia and John went for car rides; the afternoon walks to the corner drug store; the before-dinner conversations in the parlor; the occasional visits to the moving pictures—these were the slight stuffs, scarcely more than mere boarding-house civilities, from which Mr. Tettigrew built his vehicle of exultation.

Winter had absorbed the last bit of beauty from the West's glorious Indian summer before Mr. Tettigrew at length decided that, though "things" were going splendidly, they were, also, going very slowly, and that a bit of encouragement or advice might be needed right now for an accelerator.

Consequently, one evening, when he met John in the lower hall he stopped and, after a few commonplaces, drifted into a careful eulogy of Alicia.

"Perhaps," John acceded. "But, to be frank, I like the things you have told me about her, but I don't like her. Oh, I know," he went on in answer to Phineas' skeptical smile, "but I had to get acquainted with her to find out that



"I'm leaving," she answered, "because I hate it here, and every sentimental person who lives here!"

I didn't like her. I thought, at first, that I did. I don't. She is nineteen years old and hard all the way through. She's glacial! Pity, with her amazing beauty and those fine instincts. No. I don't deny she has fine instincts, but they are frozen, too, like the flowers one sees in blocks of ice in market windows. Then, there is the way she treats Tessie. Tessie bores her to death, as she does all of us, but she is so—well, sort of patient with her."

"And in that," urged Mr. Tettigrew,

"do you not discern a break in the ice?"

"Perhaps a minute crack. But at that, I'd hate to have any one offer her five dollars each for Tessie's ears."

"I think," responded Mr. Tettigrew, "that you are wronging Miss Alicia."

"I hope so"—and John's dark eyes, for an instant, seemed to reflect at least the shadow of the dreams in Phineas' blue ones—"but—I think not. When a girl can say what she said last night—it was moonlight, too, and we were speaking of love, and she said —" He glanced over Phineas' shoulder, snapped his sentence short and stalked into the dining room.

Phineas stared after him in bewilderment and then a feminine voice, sharp with a snarl that comes from the impediment of closed teeth, explained John's abruptness.

"He needn't have rushed off. I'm

leaving in the morning and I'll not bother him in the meantime," the girl was saying.

She turned and started up the stairs. Phineas followed her and put a detaining hand on her arm.

"Miss Alicia," he pleaded, "you wouldn't run off this way, without telling even me why?"

"I am leaving," she answered, "because I hate it here, and every sentimental person who lives here! I heard him talking just now. Five dollars each

for Tessie's ears! Oh," she turned to Phineas with a quick, destroying gesture, "I'd hate to have any one offer me fifty cents each for his ears."

"Then," questioned Mr. Tettigrew, "would you be interested in an offer of ten thousand dollars for his head? Suppose"—he opened the door of his room—"that we step in here and discuss it, while the others are at dinner."

"No," she protested but, protesting, she preceded him into the room.

"Miss Alicia," Mr. Tettigrew began, and his voice had a new whimpering intonation, "I am an old man. A few more years and where will I be, without money? And you," he sank his voice to a whisper, "you, too, want money."

"What are you trying to get at?"

"Prefix a D," Mr. Tettigrew still spoke in whispers, "and suffix a 'sky' to Raven, and what have you? D-raven-sky. And what does that mean to you?"

"Nothing. It sounds Russian."

"It is Russian. This man is a Russian who, many years ago, was exiled to Siberia. He escaped to America and here he lived until after the revolution, when he returned to his country. But, after the Bolsheviks came into power, he was again forced to find a refuge in this country. The Bolsheviks fear him, and with reason. They have offered, secretly, of course, a reward of twenty thousand dollars for his capture."

"How," it came crushed from her throat, "do you know?"

"I have told you that people gave me their confidences. Ivan Dravensky gave me his. I have in my classes—you knew that I teach English in the college—a Russian boy, a Bolshevik, who believes that I am in entire sympathy with their cause. He has told me many things. Last night he told me that they are coming here to-night to get this man."

"You," Alicia's hands knotted in her lap, "have—told them?"

"No, they have known for some time."

"And—and—what will they do to him?"

"That," explained Mr. Tettigrew, "need not be on our consciences. They will get him without us."

"Then, how could we claim the money?"

Phineas' wry smile took on new lines.

"Easily," he said. "If this band of men get him to-night, no individual will have discovered him and given him up so there will be no one to claim the reward. But, if you can see that he keeps in his room and then, when you hear steps on the stairs, open his door and say: 'Here is Ivan Dravensky,' the twenty thousand dollars will be ours."

Alicia bent forward in her chair.

"Why don't you do it yourself?"

The whimper returned to Phineas' voice as he said, "Because I have in me a strain of that stuff which you deride as sentimentality, and John—has been my friend. But you—I feel sure that you have no such weakness."

Alicia jumped from her chair and went to the window.

"There is a queer-looking man walking down across the street," she said. "I suppose they are guarding the house?"

"Possibly," Phineas assented.

She turned, and the craft of her smile was more than a match for that of Mr. Tettigrew's.

"You said you were a friend of John's," she said, "but you are a friend of theirs, too. I'd think you'd be as much on their side as you are on his, especially since their side means the money for you."

"It is a difficult situation," Mr. Tettigrew confessed.

"Not for me! Listen," she tipped her head to one side, "the chairs are

scraping. They've finished dinner. I'll run down and try to keep him from going out. They might catch him outside and we'd miss the reward."

"It would be as well," he agreed.

When the door had closed behind her the malicious expression faded from Phineas' face and the mouth, released from the tightened lines of craft, sank weakly into an expression which suggested a weariness eternal.

On his desk a great pile of folded papers demanded an energy which Phineas did not have. Sleep came coaxingly close and snatched herself away. Raindrops began to tap on the window, gently at first, and then a wind switched out, shaking the wet panes and changing the gentle patter into a spiteful splashing. The knock on his door had sounded twice before Phineas realized that it was not the wind's work, and called for his visitor to come in.

"Were you asleep?" It was Alicia's voice and as she spoke she pressed the wall switch and Mr. Tettigrew's reading lamp glowed greenly.

He sat up, blinking the darkness from his eyes, and looked at her. She was in an apple orchard, foaming with blossoms; sunlight was glinting her hair, sunbeams were shining from her eyes; and across her shoulders was a man's arm.

"It wasn't true," said Alicia, "and he says you know it wasn't!"

"Yes," said Phineas.

"He has never been in Russia," said Alicia, "and he says you know he hasn't."

"Yes," Phineas agreed, "I know."

"But then why—why——"

Mr. Tettigrew waved his hands about and twinkled his fingers.

"Wings!" he said, "Wings!"

He looked to John for comprehension, but he did not find it. That young

man's face was stern, and it was odd that words so resonant with pride could come from so grim a mouth. He said:

"Why you chose to tell her such absurdities, such falsehoods about me, and about most of the others who live here, it is hard for me to understand. Your tales have made her unhappy; have made her feel that she was—different, as she says, and not up to the rest of us. But to-night you went too far. You frightened her. She was in a terrible state of excitement when she came to warn me. She"—the grimness left his face and some of her sunlight found it as he repeated—"came to warn me, and begged me to take all of her little money, and dress in her clothes, and ——" He faltered, and as his arm tightened about the girl's shoulder, and his eyes went searching for hers, Phineas fled on tiptoe.

In the hall he met Mrs. Haddy, removing a rocking chair from a six-dollar room to put it into a ten-dollar room.

"My dear lady," Phineas burst out, and because he was still waving his hands and twinkling their fingers, and because he was still on his tiptoes, he looked as if he were trying to execute a dance, too difficult for him, "I am overjoyed to inform you that I was mistaken, and that our little friend is not a kiwi-kiwi bird."

"Lands alive!" said Mrs. Haddy.

"But," Phineas said, as he pursued her to the door of the room, "I am led to believe that, were a kiwi-kiwi bird placed in a different environment, a more tropical country, perhaps, where wings were a necessity, where there were no others of its species, then, from its rudiments, wings might, indeed would, develop."

"Lands alive!" said Mrs. Haddy, and dragged the chair into the ten-dollar room, and closed the door.



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Wallace Eddinger, who  
is Reggie, the dis-  
tracted hero.

# NEW YORK STAGE SUCCESSSES

## Wedding Bells

A JOYOUS COMEDY

By Salisbury Field



Margaret Lawrence,  
the captivating  
Rosalie.

**W**HAT would you do if your wife, who had deserted you after your first quarrel, disappeared and then divorced you, suddenly returned to your home the day before you were to marry another woman?

That is the situation Reginald Carter has to face on the day before his wedding to Marcia Hunter. Even before the charming, irrepressible Rosalie makes her unexpected entrance, Reggie is troubled and distracted. At the license bureau, with his bride-to-be, there has been a row when Marcia learns that he has been married before. And then Jackson, Reggie's indispensable English butler, gives notice that he shall be leaving before the new mistress arrives. Jackson admits that he himself is not a bachelor, but that under three different names he has wed as many wives, and as a consequence has found it expedient to leave England.

REGGIE (*severely*): I think it was immoral of you to marry three times like that, Jackson. I'm not sure I shouldn't discharge you on the spot.

JACKSON: As for that, sir, I was about to give notice. You see, sir, there are many drawbacks to a married establishment. In the first place, there are always housemaids about. And that would mean trouble for me, sir, sooner or later.

REGGIE: But *our* housemaids might not prove susceptible.

JACKSON: Housemaids are always suscep-

tible, sir. I'm sorry, but I'm afraid I'll have to leave you—unless— Has it ever occurred to you, sir, that it's far easier to get a good wife in America than a good servant?

REGGIE: By George! I believe you're right. But look here, Jackson—I don't want to lose you. Can't we come to some agreement? If I were to promise you that we'd do without housemaids, would you stay then?

JACKSON: There would still be a lady's maid, sir—your wife would demand that. And my experience has been, sir, that ladies' maids are even more susceptible than house-

REGGIE: But supposing my wife's maid were married—happily married?

JACKSON (*sadly*): Ladies' maids are never happily married, sir.

REGGIE: Well, much as I'd like to keep you, I can hardly put off my wedding to-morrow on that account.

JACKSON: No, sir, I didn't think you would. But I thought it only fair to mention it.

Reggie is in very low spirits indeed when his debonair bachelor friend, Spencer Wells, drops in.

SPENCER (*gayly*): Hullo! How's the merry little bridegroom to-day?

REGGIE: Oh, don't be so damned jolly!

SPENCER: Oh, it's like that? I say! Anything wrong?

REGGIE: Everything's wrong. I've had a row with Marcia. And Jackson's leaving me. He doesn't approve of my marrying.

SPENCER: By Jove! No wonder you're down! I wonder you go on with it.

REGGIE: It is pretty steep, isn't it?

SPENCER: Steep? It's precipitious, old boy—precipitious!

By Courtesy of the Author and of the Selwyns, Producers.

REGGIE: Spencer, I've a mind to tell you something. What would you say if I were to tell you I'd been married before?

SPENCER: Married! And you never told me—your best friend?

REGGIE: Oh, I never told anybody. It happened on my way to Japan, a year ago last October. We met in Santa Barbara. We were at the same hotel. Her name was Rosalie. It was very romantic. I put my shoes outside my door to be cleaned. Her dog chewed one of them up. And—and two days later we were married. You see, she was going to Japan, too, and she had her ticket on the same boat. You've no idea how wonderful she was, Spencer.

SPENCER: Yes, I have. They're always wonderful. But what happened?

REGGIE: One day at luncheon I admired a woman in the dining room who had red hair—and the next day Rosalie dyed her hair red. Oh! I was furious, and I told her she looked like a—

SPENCER: Yes, I know.

REGGIE: And she said it was plain I preferred that kind of woman, for the woman I'd admired looked like a—like a—

SPENCER: Exactly!

REGGIE: And then she left us—me and the dog. I couldn't follow her because I came down with the measles. Caught 'em from some kids at the hotel. I was ill a long time.

SPENCER: But after you got well, didn't you try to find her?

REGGIE: Of course I tried. But she'd disappeared completely. I couldn't find a trace of her—not a trace.

SPENCER: But didn't her people know? Who were her people?

REGGIE: I don't know. You see, the few days we were together I was so busy talking about myself—that I didn't have time—

SPENCER: Naturally. But go on.

REGGIE: Well, I was feeling awfully down at the time—blue, you know. And I knew she wouldn't have left me like that if she'd really cared—and I couldn't find her—so I went on to Japan. A month later I received word from her lawyer that she'd divorced me. I don't mind telling you, Spencer, it nearly wrecked my whole life. I don't suppose I'd ever have looked at another woman as long as I lived—if I hadn't met Marcia.

SPENCER: That's a quaint idea. What's all this about your having a row with Marcia?

REGGIE (*indignantly*): It was all the fault of that damned clerk at the marriage-license bureau. I don't know what this country's coming to, Spencer, when a chap like that—a public servant, mind—can ask you questions that might easily wreck your whole

life. He asked me if I'd ever been married before, and I had to swear to it—with Marcia standing right there at my elbow!

SPENCER: Bally outrage! But do you mean to tell me Marcia didn't know you'd been married before?

REGGIE: No. And I didn't want her to know it. Besides, her mother doesn't believe in divorce.

SPENCER: You patched it up, didn't you?

REGGIE (*sighing*): No—we didn't. You see, she wanted to know all about Rosalie. But how could I tell her? If I told her the truth, why, she'd always be imagining things about every red-headed woman I ever looked at! And besides—I—I loved Rosalie—and—hang it all—a chap can't tell about the woman he loved yesterday to the girl he loves to-day. It isn't decent.

Douglas Ordway, another friend of Reggie's, is announced. Douglas is a poet, a pale youth, with dark, burning eyes, and no sense of humor. He appears to be in some mental misery, and is taunted with being in love.

SPENCER: Of course you're in love, my dear fellow. If you weren't, you wouldn't deny it.

DOUGLAS (*defiantly*): Well, supposing I am in love? *I am in love*. Hopelessly, tragically, miserably in love!

SPENCER: By Jove, Douglas! I congratulate you on being in love like that. It's splendid! What's her name, Douglas? Perhaps I've loved her, too. I've loved almost every woman in New York.

REGGIE: Don't rag him, Spencer. Come, Douglas, buck up. You've got to be in good form for my bachelor dinner to-night.

DOUGLAS (*rising*): That's what I came to tell you. I can't come to your dinner. I'm awfully sorry, but I can't possibly come.

Just then Marcia and her mother arrive, seeking an explanation and apology from Reggie. Mrs. Hunter greets Reggie stiffly, while Marcia absolutely ignores him.

REGGIE (*to Mrs. Hunter*): I'm awfully glad to see you. Won't you sit down?

Mrs. HUNTER: Thanks, Reginald, but I didn't come here for a social call. I came as a mother. I may be many other things, but first of all I'm a mother.

REGGIE (*politely*): It's awfully good of you, I'm sure.

Mrs. HUNTER: Reginald, my mother's heart tells me you have acted very badly toward my ewe lamb.



REGGIE (*Wallace Eddinger*): How can I ask her to forgive me when she won't even speak to me?  
 MRS. HUNTER (*Mrs. Jacques Martin*): Marcia is young and spirited, and perhaps a little spoiled. But at heart she's generous and forgiving. Aren't you, my darling?

REGGIE: I'm awfully sorry.

MRS. HUNTER: It seems you have been married before. Why didn't you tell us?

REGGIE: You see—I didn't think it was necessary. My present and future are Marcia's, if she wants them. My past is my own.

MRS. HUNTER: No, Reginald, your past is not your own. You should have told Marcia. You have wounded my poor girl deeply. If

you're sorry, you'll ask her to forgive you.

REGGIE: How can I ask her when she won't even speak to me?

MRS. HUNTER: Marcia is young and spirited, and perhaps a little spoiled. But at heart she's generous and forgiving. Aren't you, my darling?

MARCIA: No! I'm not! I didn't want to come here, Reggie, but mother made me.



DOUGLAS (*Clark Silvernail*): This poem was written, Marcia, not with my hand, nor with my head—but with my heart.

MARCIA (*Jessie Glendenning*): You do say such nice things to me, Douglas.

MRS. HUNTER: Why, Marcia, it was you who insisted on coming.

But while Mrs. Hunter is having tea in the dining room with Spencer and Douglas, Marcia decides to forgive Reggie's past and go on with the wedding, which is to take place to-morrow at St. Martin's, with the bishop officiating.

REGGIE (*relieved*): That's the girl! (*Kisses MARCIA.*) And you'll promise never to mention my first wife—my first past again?

MARCIA: Yes, Reggie. Only, for goodness' sake, don't tell mother you were divorced. You know she doesn't believe in divorce, so I just let her think you—that person I promised not to mention—died. Now run along, you old divorced darling, and tell mother we've made up.

REGGIE: You've been bully about the way I acted, Marcia. I'm no end grateful. (*DOUGLAS enters a moment after REGGIE'S exit.*)

DOUGLAS: Marcia! This is wonderful! I never thought I'd see you alone again. I—

I've written a poem to you, Marcia.

MARCIA: How splendid! Where is it? I never had a poem written to me before.

DOUGLAS: It isn't a very long one—only four lines. (*Taking her hand*) The more one feels, the less one has to say, Marcia. This poem was written, not with my hand, nor with my head—but with my heart.

MARCIA (*sighing luxuriously*): You do say such nice things to me! Go on.

DOUGLAS (*reading*):

You are like a lily in a lovely garden,  
You are like moonlight on an enchanted sea;  
You are like the dawn of a summer morning—

But alas! You are not for me.

MARCIA: Why, Douglas! I love it! Poor boy! Do you really care so much?

DOUGLAS (*turning away*): Yes, Marcia.

MARCIA: I care for you, too, Douglas. Not enough to marry you, but I do care. And I'm glad you love me. It's very comforting to a girl to know that somebody's going to love her after she's married. If you're lonely while I'm away, you may write to me. Of course we're not telling everybody where we're going, but I'm sure Reggie wouldn't mind my telling you. We're going to Palm Beach on our honeymoon. (*DOUGLAS shudders.*) You can write me there. And you'll come and see me very often after we get back, won't you?

DOUGLAS: No, Marcia. As soon as the wedding is over, I'm going away. And I'm never coming back. I love you too much! I couldn't bear to see you married to some one else. It's good-by, Marcia, good-by forever!

MARCIA: You'll—you'll always love me, won't you?

DOUGLAS: Always.

His callers gone, Reggie draws a sigh of relief as he takes up the evening paper. Jackson enters with the card of



"Madame Brousseau." Although the name is a strange one, and Reggie protests, he is at length persuaded to see the visitor. It is Rosalie, chic and charming, though a little agitated, who enters.

REGGIE: Rosalie!

ROSALIE: Hello, Reggie! I—I hope it's a pleasant surprise.

REGGIE: Pleasant? Why, I was thinking about you only a minute ago. It's the nicest thing that ever happened to me—your dropping in to see me like this.

ROSALIE: Yes—I—I just dropped in. You see, I only arrived this morning, and I found your address in the telephone book, so—I—thought I'd call and get my dog.

REGGIE: Your dog?

ROSALIE: Yes, Pinky—the dog I left with you in Santa Barbara. Don't tell me any-

thing has happened to him! (REGGIE is silent.) He—he's not dead?

REGGIE: I hope not. He was stolen.

ROSALIE: Stolen? Poor Pinky! I think you might have taken better care of him.

REGGIE: I couldn't, Rosalie. The day after you left me, I came down with—an illness—a severe illness. I was sick quite a long time. It was—er—measles, and no laughing matter.

ROSALIE: You poor boy! So you turned red—like my hair.

REGGIE: Yes. And I looked like the devil—and so did you.

ROSALIE: I know I did, Reggie. That's one reason I ran away. But I thought of course you'd follow me.

REGGIE: Well, you see I was angry with you for leaving me like that. And when I got over being angry, I had measles. And then, when I did try to find you, I couldn't—and I knew you didn't love me any more—and I'd lost your dog—

ROSALIE: Then you did try to find me?

REGGIE: I should say I did! I hired detectives and everything! Before I got through I had a photograph or description of every red-headed woman in California. But none of them was you.

ROSALIE: Yet you went to Japan—where we were going together! If you'd really cared, you wouldn't have gone there alone.

REGGIE: Well, I had to go somewhere, didn't I? You had no right to leave me like that and hide so I couldn't find you. And then to divorce me on the grounds of desertion! I didn't desert you. You deserted me.

ROSALIE (smiling): I know. But the courts in California are so obliging. Did you like Japan, Reggie?

REGGIE: No!

ROSALIE: Did you like China?

REGGIE: No. And I went to India, and I didn't like India. And I came back to Cali-



ROSALIE (Margaret Lawrence): It's a wonderful dinner, Reggie. Sure you weren't giving a party?



REGGIE: Oh, Rosalie, why didn't we end that other quarrel like this?

fornia, and I didn't like California. And I returned to New York, and I didn't like New York.

ROSALIE: Why didn't you like them?

REGGIE: You know very well why. I missed you. Everywhere I went I missed you. And to have you come in and see me like this! (*Studying her card*) Somehow I'd hoped you wouldn't marry again. Oh, Rosalie, how could you?

ROSALIE: Then you don't believe in marrying again?

REGGIE (*emphatically*): No! Er—I mean one doesn't—one shouldn't—Where did you meet him, Rosalie?

ROSALIE: Meet whom?

REGGIE: Monsieur Brousseau.

ROSALIE: Oh! I met him in Paris.

REGGIE: So you went to Paris!

ROSALIE: I had to. It's the only place where they really understand hair. Hadn't you noticed I'm not wearing it red?

REGGIE: Certainly I noticed it—the minute

you came in. Are you happy, Rosalie?

ROSALIE: Why, yes, Reggie. Perhaps I'm not as happy as I might be. But I'm ever so much happier than I was when I wasn't happy. Is any one really happy?

REGGIE: We were.

ROSALIE: The past tense, Reggie. That's where one usually finds happiness—in the past tense.

REGGIE: Well, I'm happy this minute. It's wonderful to see you again. I never thought I would. Shall you be in town long?

ROSALIE: No, I'm leaving to-morrow for the West. (*Looking admiringly about room*) You do yourself rather well, Reggie. Rather interesting to see where I might have lived if I hadn't gone in for red hair. Are you in town for the

winter?

REGGIE: No, I'm—I'm going South to-morrow. Yes. Palm Beach.

ROSALIE: Going alone?

REGGIE: N-no. There's—er—two of us going.

ROSALIE: Pleasure trip?

REGGIE: It's—it's supposed to be. But how can you expect me to be enthusiastic about going South when you're going West?

ROSALIE: Then why go?

REGGIE: I've—I've promised. Do you realize, Rosalie, we may never see each other again? I think we ought to make the most of the little time we have.

ROSALIE: We might dine together. Would you like that?

REGGIE: Like it? I should say I *would*!

ROSALIE: Then that's settled. Where shall we dine?

REGGIE: We'll dine here. That's what we'll do. We'll dine here. I've got a bully dinner around here somewhere. (*Hunts for*

*bachelor-dinner menu, which he hands to ROSALIE.)*

ROSALIE: It's a wonderful dinner, Reggie. Sure you weren't giving a party?

REGGIE: That's just it. I was giving a party.

ROSALIE: But I didn't dream you were giving a party. That changes everything.

REGGIE: No, it doesn't. I'll get rid of the party. I don't know how—but I'll get rid of it.

REGGIE (*having summoned JACKSON*): Madame Brousseau is dining here with me to-night, Jackson.

JACKSON: Very good, sir. But where will the gentlemen dine?

REGGIE: That's just it. Where will they dine? What do you suggest, Jackson?

JACKSON (*thinking rapidly*): Well, I'm afraid, sir, you'll have to be taken suddenly ill. Then I'll ring up Mr. Wells and ask him to take over the dinner, sir. And I'll



REGGIE: It's my shoe—the one Pinky chewed. I've always kept it because if it hadn't been for Pinky chewing it, I'd never have met you. I tell you, Rosalie, Pinky was some dog!

ROSALIE: No, Reggie, I won't let you.

REGGIE: But I want to, Rosalie. I never wanted anything so much in my life. Besides, it's only a stag party—just a lot of men.

ROSALIE: Oh, if it's only men! You're sure you'd rather have just me?

REGGIE: Rosalie! It's so sweet of you to come. I'm so glad you're coming I don't know what to do. But I hate to have you go now. You're sure this isn't all a dream? You're sure you're really coming back?

ROSALIE (*at the door*): Cross my heart and hope to die if I don't. *Au revoir*, Reggie.

send the favors and decorations over to the club, and order the dinner there.

REGGIE: Good! I'm ill. Get busy, Jackson.

The delight of having Rosalie to dinner is quite all that Reggie has anticipated. They have the gayest, happiest of evenings, filled with songs and tender reminiscences of Pinky, Santa Barbara, the little cottage covered with pink—no, yellow—roses, and the blissful days together. All mention of Rosalie's

"Monsieur Brousseau" and of Reggie's "to-morrow" is forbidden. And then Reggie brings out a ribbon-tied box, containing his one precious keepsake. He unwraps a battered patent-leather shoe and holds it up.

ROSALIE: What in the world—

REGGIE: It's my shoe. The one Pinky chewed. I've always kept it, because if it hadn't been for Pinky chewing it, I'd never have met you. (ROSALIE is deeply touched.) Here are Pinky's toothmarks, just as plain. I tell you, Rosalie, Pinky was some dog! (Proudly displaying scar on his wrist) See that scar? That's where he bit me.

ROSALIE: He didn't mean to bite you.

REGGIE: Of course not! Why, that dog fairly worshiped me! Only bit me twice.

I felt terribly when he was stolen, Rosalie. You see he was all I had left. Now, here's another thing—your lawyer didn't—I mean he should have—I mean—hang it all, Rosalie! —I'm rich, and I ought to pay you alimony.

ROSALIE: Why, Reggie, of course not!

REGGIE (eagerly): But I'd love to. And then I'd know you'd never want for anything. Please let me settle something on you, Rosalie.

ROSALIE: I couldn't, Reggie. But you're a dear to think of it.

REGGIE: I'm not. I'm a swine. Rosalie, there's something I've got to tell you sooner or later. I ought to have told you this afternoon. Only if I had, you wouldn't have come to dinner. And if I told you now, you'd go home.

ROSALIE: Then I forbid you to tell me.



SPENCER (Percy Ames): I'm glad I came—because if I hadn't come, I wouldn't have met you, and —if I hadn't met you—

REGGIE: Spencer! If the boys are worried about me, don't you think you'd better go back and tell them I'm all right?



MARCIA: You can have your old last year's husband! I don't want him.

ROSALIE: I hope you don't think *I* want him.

I don't want to go home yet. I'm having a wonderful time! (*Picks up card from table.*) Is it because of—Monsieur Brouseau that you— Are you jealous of him, Reggie?

REGGIE: I hate him. Rosalie, if he ever—I was going to say something. Only it seems so disloyal to talk about some one who—

ROSALIE: Reggie, I'd no idea you were such a Puritan.

REGGIE: I'm not a Puritan. If I were, I wouldn't be making love to another man's wife.

ROSALIE: But you haven't been making love to me.

REGGIE: I have, too. If you knew anything about me, you'd know that every time I've looked at you I've told you I loved you.

ROSALIE: But you don't love me.

REGGIE: I do love you. I've always loved you. (*ROSALIE puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*) Why, Rosalie, dearest! What is it?

ROSALIE: I—I suppose it's because I—I'm happy, Reggie. You see, when I came here this afternoon, I—I didn't know what

had happened to you. I hadn't seen you for so long, and—and I thought perhaps—perhaps there might be some one else. (*REGGIE starts guiltily.*) But when you told me—and oh, it was sweet to hear you say it—that you thought it was wrong to marry again, I—I felt so guilty.

REGGIE: So did I—I mean one does get lonely. And one marries again just because— (*SPENCER WELLS enters breezily.*)

SPENCER: I say, look here, my dear old boy, what's all this about— (*Catching sight of ROSALIE.*) Oh!

REGGIE (*annoyed*): I'm not at home to callers.

SPENCER: I'm awfully sorry, Reggie, but you see your being ill like that—

REGGIE: Didn't Jackson tell you it was nothing serious?

SPENCER: On the contrary, old boy, Jackson said you were suffering from a severe—er—heart attack. So, after I got the party going, I slipped away to see how you were. Worried, you know—but, of course, if you're all right—

REGGIE (*urging SPENCER off*): Of course I'm all right.



DOUGLAS: Marcia, I'm the most miserable man in the world. To have my dearest dream come true, and then vanish before my eyes. To love—to be loved—and then—and then—I mean I—I'm already married.

ROSALIE (*amused*): It was bad of Reggie to throw over a party like that. Though I'm sure I feel very flattered that he should do it for me.

SPENCER (*gallantly*): By Jove, I don't blame him! I should have done exactly the same thing in his place.

ROSALIE (*smiling*): You must present this nice man to me, Reggie.

SPENCER: Yes, Reggie. (*Shaking hands with her*) My name's Spencer Wells. I'm Reggie's best friend.

ROSALIE: And I once had the honor of being Reggie's wife for a few minutes.

SPENCER: Oh! I'm awfully glad to meet you. It's a great pleasure to meet any wife of Reggie's.

ROSALIE: Has he so many wives?

SPENCER: Oh, no! But he's going to—

REGGIE: Spencer!

SPENCER: He—he's going to—to Florida.

ROSALIE: So he told me. But perhaps—I only say perhaps, Mr. Wells—he'll change his mind.

SPENCER (*crossing to REGGIE*): Oh, I say! You can't back out at the last minute.

REGGIE: Don't worry. I have no idea of backing out. Spencer! If the boys are worried about me, don't you think you'd better go back and tell them I'm all right?

SPENCER: Yes, I expect I had. (*To ROSALIE*) I don't want to go, you know. And I do hope I'll see you again soon.

ROSALIE: I hope so, too, Mr. Wells.

SPENCER: Well, maybe we can arrange it.

REGGIE (*impatiently*): Spencer!

SPENCER: Going, old boy, going. (*Smiling at ROSALIE*) Well, good-by. (*He lingers hopefully as JACKSON enters.*)

JACKSON: I'm sorry, sir, but that newspaper lady is here for an interview and refuses to go until she's seen you personally, sir.

REGGIE: But I can't see her! Didn't you tell her I was ill?

JACKSON: Yes, sir. But she said she happened to know you were *not* ill.

REGGIE: But how could she know that? Well, we can't have her in the house spying on us. I suppose I'll have to see her. Come on, Spencer.

SPENCER (*to ROSALIE*): You don't mind my staying till Reggie's done seeing that woman?

ROSALIE: Why, I wouldn't dream of letting you go. But I had no idea Reggie was so famous. Fancy newspaper women forcing themselves into the house to interview him like that.



REGGIE: Just a little matter of business. I shan't be gone long, Rosalie.

ROSALIE: If Mr. Wells is as nice as he looks, I shan't miss you.

REGGIE: Well, he isn't! (*Exits.*)

SPENCER: So you're Rosalie.

ROSALIE: What has Reggie told you about me?

SPENCER: For one thing he told me how wonderful you were. And I must say he didn't exaggerate.

ROSALIE: I think I'm going to like you, Mr. Wells. Will you tell me something? Why is it Reggie doesn't want to go to Palm Beach to-morrow?

SPENCER (*startled*): Look here! Did Reggie tell you he didn't want to go?

ROSALIE: Well, not in so many words. But you know perfectly well he doesn't want to go. Frankly, Mr. Wells, I don't approve of it at all.

SPENCER: Don't approve of what?

ROSALIE: Of Reggie's marrying that Hunter girl to-morrow.

SPENCER: Well, I'm dashed! Then you know?

ROSALIE: Reggie's been trying to tell me all evening, only I wouldn't let him. What I didn't count on was his marrying so soon.

SPENCER: Oh, Reggie always marries in a hurry.

ROSALIE: But his engagement was announced only two weeks ago. I read it in the *Paris Herald*.

SPENCER: And you hopped on a boat and came right over. What?

ROSALIE: Well, you don't think I was going to let Reggie wreck his life, do you? What is she like, Mr. Wells?

SPENCER: Who? Marcia? Oh, she's like a kitten—purs and scratches and plays about.

ROSALIE: You want Reggie to be happy, don't you? Then we must keep him from marrying that Hunter girl. He'll never be happy with her.

SPENCER: How do you know he won't?

ROSALIE: Because he doesn't love her. He—he likes me better. He just the same as told me. He shan't marry her.

SPENCER: Well, I don't see how you're going to prevent it. Reggie asked Marcia to marry him, didn't he? He expects to marry her, doesn't he? He can't jilt her at the foot of the altar, can he?

ROSALIE: Then you won't help me?

SPENCER: I'm awfully sorry, but I can't possibly.

ROSALIE: Better be careful, Mr. Wells. If you don't help me, I can make it very unpleasant for you.

SPENCER: How?



ROSALIE: Is this final, Reggie?

REGGIE: Absolutely!

ROSALIE: By marrying you.

SPENCER: But, dear lady, I don't want to get married.

ROSALIE: I hope you don't think I couldn't marry you.

SPENCER: I know jolly well you could. That's the trouble. I say, have a heart! I do like being free.

The news of Reggie's illness has reached Marcia and, much concerned, she and her mother come hurrying in. Spencer nervously assures them that while Reggie is really ill, it is not serious enough to interfere with the wedding to-morrow. He hysterically attempts to hasten their departure. But Rosalie, deeply interested in her study of Marcia, moves forward.

ROSALIE: I don't know what possesses Mr. Wells, but I can assure you there's nothing wrong with Reggie. There's nothing to worry about, really.

MARCIA: Yes. But who are you?

ROSALIE: I'm a friend of Reggie's.

MARCIA: I know who you are. You're Reggie's divorced wife. Aren't you?

ROSALIE: Well, yes—since you ask. I came to dinner. Reggie invited me.

MARCIA: But if he was sick—

ROSALIE: Oh, that was only an excuse. He had a dull party, and that was his way of getting rid of it.

MARCIA: Dull party? It was his farewell bachelor dinner! Do you mean to tell me Reggie threw that over for you?

MRS. HUNTER: Never mind, my darling.

MARCIA (*furiously*): But I do mind! Why should Reggie treat me like that? He just said he was sick so he could invite women to dinner! (*To ROSALIE*) You can have your old last year's husband. I don't want him!

ROSALIE: I hope you don't think I want him. I'm very cross with Reggie. He should have told me about you the very first thing. He not only didn't tell me he was going to be married—he didn't even tell me he was engaged.

MARCIA (*to MRS. HUNTER*): Well, you don't think I'm going to marry a man who invites his divorced wife to dinner the day before my wedding, do you? I tell you, I won't stand it! I suppose he thinks he's the only man in the world. Well, he isn't. There are plenty of others. Men much nicer than Reggie. Why, there's one breaking his heart for me this minute. (*To SPENCER*) Douglas is waiting in the motor. Tell him I want him. (*To her protesting mother*) I'm going to marry Douglas. I don't care

what people say! Don't argue, mother. It won't do any good.

DOUGLAS (*entering sadly*): You wanted me, Marcia?

MARCIA: Yes, Douglas. I've changed my mind. You needn't go away now, and never see me again, and be unhappy all your life, Douglas. I'll marry you.

DOUGLAS (*groaning in horror*): Oh, my God! Marcia, I'd give my life to marry you. Only—(*In despair*) How can I tell you? I love you with all my heart and soul. I love you better than life itself. Marcia, I'm the most miserable man in the world. To see my cup of happiness almost within reach, and then to have it snatched from me! To have my dearest dream come true, and then vanish before my eyes! To love—to be loved—and then—

SPENCER: Oh, stop talking, Douglas, and say something! What the deuce do you mean?

DOUGLAS: I mean—I—I'm already married.

MARCIA: Douglas! (*As he approaches her*) Go away! Go away! REGGIE enters *breezily*, but stops, aghast.)

REGGIE (*sternly*): Marcia! What are you doing here?

MARCIA: We heard you were ill, and we were worried, so we came to see how you were.

MRS. HUNTER: And we found you weren't ill, and had been having dinner with your divorced wife!

MARCIA: But it's all right, Reggie. I forgive you.

REGGIE: What? Why, Marcia, if I do things like that, you oughtn't to forgive me.

MARCIA: I know. And I wouldn't ordinarily. But this time I don't blame you. She's so sweet. You used to be very fond of her, didn't you, Reggie?

REGGIE: We won't discuss that now.

MARCIA (*to ROSALIE*): Of course that was before he met me. But Reggie is like that—always loyal to old friends. And when they turn up unexpectedly, no matter how inconvenient it is, he always invites them to dinner. I hope you'll dine with us again, after we return from Palm Beach.

ROSALIE: That is very kind of you.

MARCIA: And now you'll excuse mother and me, won't you? I'm sure you and Reggie want to talk over old times. Come, mother. Aren't you coming to put me in the motor, Reggie?

REGGIE: Yes, of course. Are you quite sure you forgive me, Marcia? You oughtn't to, you know. I've behaved very badly.

MARCIA: Why, of course I forgive you!

There's really nothing to forgive, you foolish boy! (They exit.)

SPENCER: Well, I'm damned!

ROSALIE: Miss Hunter is much cleverer than I thought. She did remarkably well—for a kitten. And Reggie actually seems to believe she's forgiven him. Why are men such idiots, Mr. Wells?

SPENCER: Dear lady, if we knew we couldn't be idiots.

Meantime, Rosalie's English maid, Hooper, who has been waiting for her mistress, has encountered the susceptible Jackson. There is recognition and a happy reconciliation. Hooper was the first girl Jackson married and deserted, many years before. Rosalie graciously allows her maid to remain with her new-found spouse, and requested Jackson to summon a taxi for herself.

REGGIE (returning): I don't suppose you'll ever forgive me, Rosalie.

ROSALIE: So you didn't intend I should know you were to be married?

REGGIE: I was going to tell you before you went home.

ROSALIE: Oh! You were saving it for the end—as a nice surprise?

REGGIE: Well, I couldn't have told you before. If I'd told you this afternoon, you wouldn't have come to dinner. And I had to see you again—I just had to! From the moment you came into the room this afternoon, the only thing I could think about was seeing you again.

ROSALIE: Well, now that you've seen me again, are you satisfied?

REGGIE: No.

ROSALIE: But you're going to marry Miss Hunter to-morrow, aren't you?



JACKSON (John Harwood): Would you like a cocktail, sir?

SPENCER: Thank you, Jackson. By Jove! I needed that. Weddings always give me the willies—sad, you know.

REGGIE: Yes, I've got to. She expects me to marry her. Her mother expects me to marry her. Everybody expects it.

ROSALIE: What of that? My mother expected me to be a boy, and I was a girl. But I didn't mind.

REGGIE: That's just it. You don't mind. If you'd minded, you wouldn't have come to see me this afternoon, and upset my life like this.

ROSALIE: I didn't come to see you. I came to get my dog.

REGGIE: You always did care more for that damned dog than you did for me.

ROSALIE: At least Pinky was loyal to me. REGGIE: You don't think I'm going through life being loyal to another man's wife, do you?

ROSALIE: Why not? Lots of men do.

REGGIE: Well, I'm not like that. I'm go-

ing to play the game. I'm going to be loyal to Marcia.

ROSALIE: That's good. Miss Hunter is charming, Reggie. I like her—quite as much as she likes me. I'm sure you'll be very happy with her.

REGGIE: I won't! How can I be happy with her, when I love you?

ROSALIE: Do you call that being loyal to Miss Hunter?

REGGIE: I didn't say I *was* loyal to her. I said I was going to be.

ROSALIE: Oh—to-morrow? Well, I hope you have a nice day for it.

REGGIE (*reproachfully*): You don't care at all, do you?

ROSALIE: Oh, you want me to care? You want to break my heart?

REGGIE: I don't. I want you to be happy. Only I did think you cared enough not to be so— Hang it all, Rosalie! Don't you realize we're saying "good-by" forever?

ROSALIE: Then you never expect to see me again? (*Extending hand*) Good-by.

REGGIE: Will you—will you kiss me good-by, Rosalie?

ROSALIE: Do you think I should?

REGGIE: No. But I wish you would. Will you?

ROSALIE: No, Reggie.

REGGIE: All right. I'm sorry I asked you. But don't think I'm going to let you hang like a black cloud over my life. I'm not. To-morrow I'll have a wife—one who appreciates me—one who is kind and thoughtful—one who forgives me when I do the wrong thing. There was a time, to-night, when I felt I'd made a mistake—when the few hours of happiness we've had together seemed worth more than all the future. But I know different now. My future is Marcia's. I'll be absolutely loyal to her. And I won't wait until to-morrow to begin. I'll begin now—to-night!

ROSALIE: Is this final, Reggie?

REGGIE: Absolutely.

ROSALIE: Even if I've changed my mind? Even if I'll say good-by to you the way you want me to?

REGGIE (*radiantly*): Rosalie! Will you?

ROSALIE: No, Reggie. I only wanted to find out how loyal you really were. Good-night. (*Goes out, smiling over her shoulder at REGGIE.*)

Next morning a gloomy, irritable bridegroom prepares for his wedding. Spencer, resplendent in his best-man garb, drops in early.

SPENCER: You've got to face the music, so you might as well cheer up, old man.

REGGIE: It's a damned solemn thing to get married—especially the second time. And you get to thinking about things and wondering. (*Kneels on floor before sofa, pulls out box and takes out shoe.*)

SPENCER: What are you going to do—throw old shoes at yourself when you get married?



SPENCER: What are you going to do, Reggie—throw old shoes at yourself when you get married?



REGGIE: Do you mean to tell me you want to marry Douglas instead of me?

REGGIE: This isn't a shoe, Spencer. It's a symbol. If it hadn't been for this shoe, I might never have met Rosalie. I said I was going to keep it as long as I lived. But I'm beginning a new life to-day, and I'm going to begin it right. I've got to. After the way Marcia acted last night, it's the only thing to do. She has a noble nature, Spencer. (*Picks up wastebasket and throws shoe into it.*) So that's the end of that. I've put Rosalie out of my life. I'm never even going to think of her again. (*The door opens and ROSALIE enters.*)

ROSALIE (*smiling*): Good morning! I didn't expect to find you here, Reggie. Or you, Mr. Wells. Oughtn't you to be at the church? I've come for Hooper. Imagine my feelings, Mr. Wells. No maid, no railroad tickets, my trunk only half packed, and my train leaving in two hours! Why, I don't even know if Jackson has his railroad ticket yet. He's going to California with us. Did he tell you?

REGGIE: No, he didn't.

ROSALIE: That was bad of him. But you see how it is, Reggie. Either I had to take Jackson, or you had to take Hooper. It would be cruel to part them. I may be sen-

timental, Mr. Wells, but I do think when two people care for each other they oughtn't to be parted. Don't you? (*JACKSON enters with REGGIE's gloves and boutonniere and the announcement that the motor is waiting.*) Have you your marriage license, Reggie? I wish I could have had time to go to your wedding, but you see how it is—

REGGIE (*with fury*): I see exactly how it is. Come on, Spencer. (*Helps SPENCER out of room, and turns angrily to ROSALIE.*) You don't care! You've never cared! If I was suffering tortures, you would only laugh at me. If I was dying, you wouldn't raise a finger to help me.

ROSALIE (*smiling*): You're wrong, Reggie. I would. (*She raises one finger.*)

REGGIE (*further enraged*): I don't know what I ever saw in you! You're not even a human being. You're a devil, that's what you are. But I'm through. If you don't believe me, look in the wastebasket. (*Exits. ROSALIE gazes after him, sighs, picks shoe out of wastebasket, and slips it into one of REGGIE's bags, packed for Palm Beach. Then she rings for JACKSON.*)

ROSALIE: Did you succeed in getting Mr. Ordway? I'm ready to see him now.



ROSALIE: He's *our* dog, Reggie—yours and mine.

JACKSON: He's in the library, ma'am.

ROSALIE (*as DOUGLAS enters*): Come in, Mr. Ordway. I want to help you.

DOUGLAS: No one can help me now.

ROSALIE: Have you any idea where your wife is, Mr. Ordway?

DOUGLAS: No. She disappeared soon after we were married. I was reading her one of my poems—quite a long one. When I finished she wasn't there. She'd gone—

ROSALIE: And you never saw her again?

DOUGLAS: Never. I looked for her, of course. I had to, you know—she was my

wife. But I never really wanted to find her—till I met Marcia. I tried to find her then, but it was hopeless. She was lost.

ROSALIE: But tell me—how in the world did you come to marry her in the first place?

DOUGLAS: It happened two years ago. I'd been living in Paris. You know what Paris is, with its lights, its wine, and its women—its— But I'd been going the pace. Fortunately, I had the strength of character to leave Paris. I went to England, and in the heart of the Surrey hills I hoped to find peace and quiet.





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ROSALIE: And you found a wife.

DOUGLAS: Yes. Oh, she was so different from the ones I'd known in Paris! She was illiterate, I grant you. But her cheeks were red like apples. We met in a lane. 'Twas toward sunset, the fairy hour when dreams come true. (ROSALIE rings for HOOPER.) And in a hedgerow of hawthorn and wild roses a blackbird caroled to his mate.

HOOPER (entering): You rang, ma'am?

DOUGLAS (starting at the sound of her voice): My God! My wife!

HOOPER: I ain't neither. I don't know what you're talking about. I ain't never set eyes on you afore in my whole life.

ROSALIE: You'll admit he looks like that photograph you once showed me?

HOOPER: Yes, ma'am. But that was another gentleman. I ain't never seen this gentleman afore.

ROSALIE: What do you say, Mr. Ordway?

DOUGLAS: If she wishes to deny me, I've nothing further to say.

ROSALIE (smiling): It seems to be a deadlock, doesn't it? Probably the best thing to do would be to ring for Jackson.

HOOPER: Oh, please don't ring for Jackson, ma'am! Him and me has just made it up. Jackson would never forgive me.

ROSALIE: Oh! Then there is something to forgive. And you did marry Mr. Ordway?

HOOPER: Yes, ma'am. It wasn't legal, though. I was already married to Jackson. Only Jackson left me and this young gentleman came along—and it was spring—

DOUGLAS: Then if you were already married, I'm free. My good woman, I honor you for leaving me.

HOOPER: You won't tell Jackson, will you.

ROSALIE: Of course he won't. No one shall tell him. You may go now, Hooper. (Turning to DOUGLAS) I must say you don't seem very enthusiastic over what I've done for you. Aren't you happy about it?

DOUGLAS (groaning): How can I be happy? What is freedom to me now? Oh, why couldn't I have known about this yesterday! (Glancing at wrist watch) At this very moment Marcia is pledging her sweet, innocent young life to another. There is nothing left for me. Nothing.

But at that very moment an excited, frustrated wedding party returns from the church. The bishop has refused to perform the ceremony in St. Martin's because of the fact that the bridegroom has been divorced. Marcia is irritated at the sight of Rosalie and Douglas.

But when she hears that Douglas is free and still in love with her, she sees a way out of the difficulty.

MRS. HUNTER (in tears): I never thought I'd live to see this day! I shall never be able to hold up my head again. Think of the talk! Think of the scandal! What would your poor dear father have said? What would your poor dear grandparents have said? What would—

MARCIA: Never mind, mother.

MRS. HUNTER: But I do mind! My only child, my own lamb, denied the sanction of the church I was born and brought up in! But I should have remembered that no divorced person ever has been, ever could be, married in St. Martin's.

MARCIA: How did the bishop know Reggie was divorced? We didn't tell him.

MRS. HUNTER: He received a note just before the ceremony. (SPENCER looks interested. He thinks he sees ROSALIE's hand.)

MARCIA: A note? Who sent it to him? Do you know, Spencer?

SPENCER (innocently): Note—note? No. How should I know?

MRS. HUNTER: Think what it meant! Everybody there—St. Martin's crowded—the bridesmaids ready—the altar decorated—and Reginald divorced! (Weeps again.)

DOUGLAS (hopefully): Mrs. Hunter, I've never been divorced.

MARCIA: Do you hear that, mother? Douglas has never been divorced. He's never been married, either. He only thought he was. An unscrupulous adventuress took advantage of his youth and inexperience. She already had a husband. So you see, mother, I can be married in St. Martin's after all—if I marry Douglas. I suppose somebody will have to tell Reggie.

REGGIE (hurrying in): It's all right. I've phoned for a Presbyterian minister. He's a regular human being, too. Didn't seem to care that when I told him I'd been divorced. Hullo, Douglas. Did you hear about the way they treated us at St. Martin's? A nice thing to do to us, wasn't it? Why, I've been a stockholder—I mean pewholder—in that church for years! (Suddenly conscious that they are all regarding him gravely) What is it? Anything wrong?

DOUGLAS (stepping forward bravely): It's my place to tell him. Reggie, I'm about to impart—we think you should know—it has become necessary that you should be informed—Reggie—(glancing despairingly at MARCIA) I can't tell him!

MARCIA: Reggie, you know how mother has set her heart on my being married in

St. Martin's. And the only reason we can't be married there is because you've been divorced. So I thought—in order not to disappoint mother—in order not to disappoint mother— (*Begins to weep, and buries her head on her mother's shoulder.*) Mother, you tell him.

MRS. HUNTER: Yes, darling. Reginald, if I had a son I couldn't be any fonder of him than I am of you. If my little Stephen had lived, he would be almost your age. First my poor dear husband passed away. Then my little Stephen— (*She breaks down and weeps.*)

REGGIE: For God's sake! What's the matter?

With halting words, the news is at last broken to an astonished Reggie.

REGGIE: Do you mean you want to marry Douglas instead of me?

MARCIA (*humbly*): Yes, please. I don't think I ever loved you as much as a girl should love the man she's going to marry.

REGGIE: Well, this is a pretty time to tell me about it!

MARCIA: Then you won't give me up?

REGGIE: Certainly I'll give you up.

MARCIA: You darling! I'll never forget your kindness, Reggie. Come, mother. Hurry, Douglas. We've got to get our marriage license. (*Exits.*)

DOUGLAS (*at the door*): Coming, my own, coming. God bless you, Reggie! I hope you don't think I've been disloyal to you.

REGGIE: No, I don't blame you. (*Looks daggers at ROSALIE.*)

ROSALIE: Reggie, this is noble of you!

REGGIE (*gazing after DOUGLAS*): Damned hypocrite! (*To SPENCER*) Steals my bride while I'm telephoning to a minister, then hopes I won't think he's disloyal! Can you beat it? (*To ROSALIE*) As for you, I hope you're satisfied. You wrecked my life once. But that wasn't enough. You couldn't be happy until you'd seen me made the laughing stock of New York. Well, I'd rather be that than married to any woman who ever lived. And why? Because you are all alike—that's why! A plain American isn't good enough for you. No! You have to have something better. So you American women chuck the man you've promised to marry for a good-for-nothing poet—you divorce the husband who worships you for a frog-eating, free-loving Frenchman, and that isn't all—

SPENCER (*interrupting*): That's all for me, old boy, I'm off. (*Kissing ROSALIE's hand*) Dear lady, you are even more wonderful than I thought. (*Exits.*)

ROSALIE: Reggie, can I be of any help?

REGGIE: No. I'm going away.

ROSALIE: Where are you going?

REGGIE: I don't know. If I knew, I wouldn't go there.

ROSALIE: Oh, if that's where you're going! Here's your bag. (*REGGIE takes the bag. Insecurely fastened, it flies open and discloses the shoe.*)

REGGIE (*angrily*): Who put that shoe in my bag?

ROSALIE: Reggie, you said you were going to keep that shoe as long as you lived!

REGGIE: Yes. And you said you were going to love, honor, and obey me as long as you lived. And what did you do?

ROSALIE: And why did I leave you? What did you tell me I looked like? Not many women would have made the sacrifice I did. You don't suppose I wanted red hair, do you? But my husband liked red hair. So I tried to give him what he wanted.

REGGIE: I never wanted you to have red hair. I hate red hair! But of course I'm to blame! It's my fault you ran away—it's my fault you dyed your hair—it's my fault your dog was stolen—

ROSALIE: I never said Pinky was stolen. I did say I thought you might have taken better care of him. But— (*Servant enters with Pekingese dog.*)

REGGIE: Good heavens! It's Pinky! (*Sternly*) Where did you find that dog?

ROSALIE: Why, I—I've had him all the time. Soon after I left you I wired the porter at the hotel, and he sent me Pinky by express.

REGGIE: Well, I'm damned! Why, I paid that porter five dollars a day just to keep looking for that dog! And I worried about that dog. Why did you tell me you'd come to get him when you already had him?

ROSALIE: I wasn't sure you'd be glad to see me. So I thought if I told you I'd come to get Pinky, you wouldn't think it was so queer—my coming to see you like that.

REGGIE: I didn't think it was queer. I thought it was wonderful!

ROSALIE: Do you hear that, Pinky? He thought it was wonderful. Give Pinky his shoe, Reggie.

REGGIE (*happily*): Yes. No! (*Throws down shoe.*) I'm damned if I'm going to give my shoe to another man's dog!

ROSALIE: But he isn't, Reggie. He's *our* dog—yours and mine. I haven't any husband. When I called on you yesterday, I was afraid you wouldn't see me, so I sent in my dressmaker's card.

REGGIE: Then you didn't marry anybody?

ROSALIE: No, Reggie.

REGGIE (*embracing her*): Oh, Rosalie!

# "Art and a Narrow Nationalism"

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Belinda and the Red Terror," "At Blimmer's," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. B. ASPELL

**In which love and art overcome differences of opinion, and make you wonder if it may not be art that will some day heal the world of its ills.**

THE prologue to the story was written in October of 1915, when Hildegard Storm rejected the first marriage proposal of Robert Barringer. He had ill-advisedly preceded it by the statement that Goethe was one of the world's three greatest artists and that art knew no nationality. Hildegard, at that moment of her career, was, like many of the worthiest of her fellow countrymen, a victim of a Germanophobia so virulent as to destroy her critical faculties and to make her regard the destruction of a certain race as sheer virtue.

The stage for the little comedy was set in her studio, across the hall from that of Florence Barringer, Robert's sister. Florence was away from her workshop, and Robert had drifted into her neighbor's—a sumptuous one maintained for her by adoring, though slightly apprehensive parents, who compensated themselves for allowing her to join the throng of artists "just off the Square," by convoying her thence at five o'clock every afternoon in the parental limousine to the parental shelter on Park Avenue.

The leading lady, her fine-spun amber hair standing out about her excited face like an aureole gone awry, spoke breathlessly of Louvain and Liège, of the Lusitania and of Rheims, crying down with these the Goethe and Martin Luther of Mr. Barringer's dispassionate disquisition.

"I wouldn't marry you," she cried,

breathless with indignation and with the mortifying knowledge that she had not maintained her cause with the cool brilliance necessary to success in argument, "if we were the last people on the earth! I wouldn't marry you, I wouldn't marry you—oh, I wouldn't marry you if I loved you instead of hating you! I'd be afraid. You, who condone——"

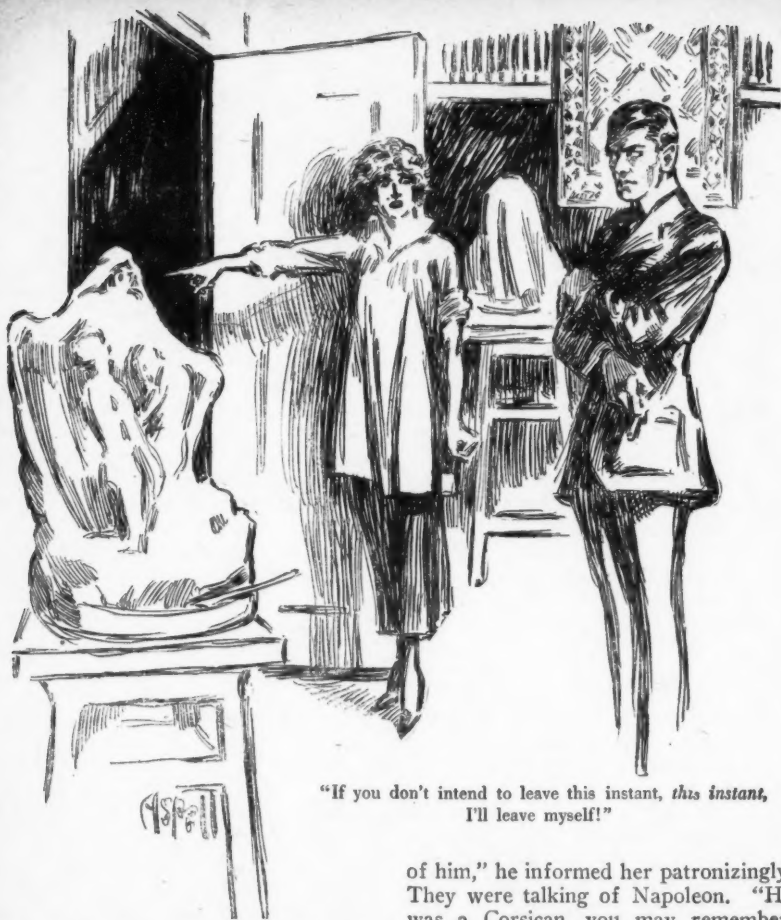
"I condone nothing," interrupted Mr. Barringer, still articulate though obviously a little angry himself, "nothing whatever. And I decline to have words put into my mouth by a girl so prejudiced that she is incapable of seeing the truth."

"Don't you think you had better go?" The gray dust from the materials out of which she was modeling a heroic symbolism of "Louvain" stood out on a face grown furiously white.

"Oh, rot, Hildegard! What's the good of coming the haughty Lady Imogene over me? You know that you've been talking arrant nonsense—arrant, illiterate nonsense, and that——"

"Because, if you don't intend to leave this instant, *this instant*, I'll leave myself!"

She flung open the door into the dusty, wide, cobwebby hall whose bare floors had echoed to the tread of two generations of beauty seekers. Robert looked at her with venom and went out. She shut the door after him with an emphasis which would have amounted to a slam in a young person of less



"If you don't intend to leave this instant, *this instant*,  
I'll leave myself!"

distinction of bearing. Her hands were cold, her cheeks were burning, there was a lump in her throat and her eyes stung with tears.

Robert did not propose to her again for a year, and again she rejected him; for again it was the fire of a quarrel that set torch to his desires and made him feel that he could not live without the lovely, illogical, prejudiced young termagant.

"You needn't grow so hot in defense

of him," he informed her patronizingly. They were talking of Napoleon. "He was a Corsican, you may remember, and if he mistreated Josephine, as I claim, you needn't feel that that constitutes a slur on the French people. He wasn't a French person, as it happens, though he has become a French boast."

"You've been pro-German from the beginning," cried Hildegard. In 1916 that was an accepted answer for any statement which one was disinclined to admit, and did not know how to rebut. "Pro-German throughout!"



"It would be silly to get angry over so absurd a statement," said Robert. "If it is pro-German to try to remember a few stray acts, acquired in the course of an expensive education, why——"

"My education," said Hildegarde, irrelevantly haughty, "has been as expensive as yours."

Robert unbent into smiles.

"But your memory isn't so retentive," he teased her. And then, at the surge of angry color over her face, he cried, "Oh, Hildy, Hildy, don't let's be foolish again! I love you, you beautiful, little tempest, you! I don't care what you know, or what you forget, if only you know that you could care for me a little bit, and will forget that I ever made you angry."

"Well, I don't know anything of the sort, and I don't forget a single one of the rude things you've said to me. You think my opinions trifling, perfectly trifling! It's insulting to talk of loving me when you really despise me. 'Illiterate' you called me once. I may be illiterate, and I may not be thinking every minute of my life where Napoleon was born, but I am thinking every minute of the report of the Bryce commission on Belgian atrocities, and I hate the sort of man who can uphold such things!"

She found herself looking at empty space where Robert had been standing. In 1916 it sometimes happened that one saved one's self from the crime of murder only by flight.

In 1917 Robert did not propose to Hildegarde. April of that momentous year had wrought with him the same miracle that it wrought with thousands of other intellectual young men. Like them, he shed all his pride in the retention of a little historical knowledge and a little philosophical spirit. From being a more or less impersonal observer of world affairs, he was converted into a wild-eyed patriot, intent only upon reaching France at once and

ending the war by his own individual slaughter of a perfectly unprecedented number of Germans. His country, his people, were at war! It was his war!

Hildegarde, on the other hand, was a somewhat more thoughtful, more temperate patriot than hitherto. Her people were in it; her friend Robert was in it. Her people and her friend Robert might conceivably—almost inevitably, indeed—be hurt, wounded, killed. And for what? Oh, to put down a horrible thing, of course; to subdue a spirit and a people capable of unbearable crimes against their own human race. But then, governmental treachery was not a German invention of 1914; and there was Goethe, and there was Martin Luther—it would be cruel if her people, her friend Robert, should be killed in fighting the men of the blood of Goethe and Martin Luther!

She tried to voice something of her new feeling to Robert who had attempted successively and vainly to volunteer in the aviation corps, the artillery, the marines, and the infantry, and who was, at the moment, moving heaven and earth to prove that his eyesight was as good as any man's, despite the adverse opinion of four examining boards. Robert waved Goethe and Martin Luther off the page of history, which now began for him in August, 1914. He showed no recollection of having ever loved Hildegarde or proposed to her or quarreled with her. His only quarrel was with the fools and incompetents who had rated his vision bad, his only desire to get into the fight.

"You'd probably shoot one of the allies if you went," Hildegarde cruelly insisted. She cherished an old-fashioned picture of war as a series of hand-to-hand encounters between individuals. Then she softened. "You'll be more useful here. Some one has to stay at home and do all the work."

"Let the others stay!" cried Robert. "Besides, with your sister Florence

over there in a Y canteen, your family has contributed enough."

Whereupon Robert anathematized his sister Florence and thought and said rude things of Hildegard as comforter and friend. Then, following the advice of a fellow architect, he found himself at a desk in Washington, the wearer of a uniform, the bearer of a captain's commission, but "not to command troops"—one of the designers and inspectors of charming homes for shipbuilders, and a perfect nuisance to the war department in his efforts to exchange his commission for a job loading machine guns overseas.

And about this time the prologue ends and the story begins.

When Robert came over for week-ends in New York, he usually occupied Florence's old studio, having given up his own lodgings. He did not often see Hildegard. It was a sacred tenet in the Storm family's creed that week-ends should be spent in the country, especially when people were living under a strain! But he liked to be near the place where she worked so hard and so successfully. He felt a thrill of possessive pride in Hildegard. She had already received a commission from a forehanded mid-Western city for the memorial statue it expected to need at the end of the war. She might not be a logician, she might have only hazy recollections of history, but she was a sculptress, was Hildy, and, by Jove, it was sporting of her to have stuck to her work, with her idiotic mother always trying to pull her off to luncheons and Palm Beaches and the rest!

If only he could get across and kill his quota of Germans and could get back sound and whole, he would let her know—seriously, not quarrelingly—how he admired her and loved her. But not until he had played his part!

A thread of light, shining out through the wide crack where Hildegard's old door failed to connect perfectly with

its lintel, struck him as he reached this point in his rumination late one night.

He was on his way to inspect the contractors' work at Stratford the next morning. It was eleven o'clock. Could Hildegard possibly be there so late? He put his valise inside his own door and went across and knocked.

"Who is it knocks?" asked a voice foreign and masculine.

"Oh, I beg pardon! A neighbor from across the hall—Barringer. Don't let me disturb you." Robert fumbled with words. But the door swung open. A tall young man stood before him—a young man whose inches made Robert instantly conscious that he was only five feet eight.

"I beg your pardon," he addressed the stranger. "I'm a friend of Miss Storm who used to have this studio. I didn't know she had given it up."

"She hasn't given it up," said the tall young man in his pleasant voice, to which the very faint accent added a touch of distinction. "Won't you come in, please? She has merely been so gracious as to allow me to use it nights and Sundays. She has—what shall I say—she has adopted me."

"Adopted you?" Robert had stepped inside. He stared dumfoundedly at a youth of blond beauty, of almost angelic blond beauty—but of almost unmistakably Teutonic beauty.

"Yes. I have the misfortune to be regarded as an enemy alien. I am—permit me, Herr Captain—to introduce myself—Gustav von Gruening, a violinist—the second violin in the Knecht Quartet which was touring your country when the—the break—occurred. I had met Miss Storm, and when she learned of my plight—I was ill in a detention camp—she exerted herself in my behalf. You can judge that there is small opportunity, however, for me to earn a large income in these days, and so she graciously gives me harborage in her studio."



"Not Madame Hilloc," an agreeable voice corrected him, "but mademoiselle. De daughter of Madam Hilloc."

"Oh, yes. Exactly." Robert felt that the blood was pulsing against his temples. He was at a loss for words for this stripling. But if he could but get hold of Hildegard for three seconds, he would be at no loss for words! He had not had so active a sentiment in regard to her for a year.

"It is unnecessary for me to say, Herr Captain," said the young man resonantly, "that I am observing in the strictest manner the rules governing the

conduct of interned aliens. Your state department, of course, passed on my case. I regret and deplore the stupidity of our diplomats, who ever allowed this break to occur. I am not a narrow nationalist, myself. Art, I hold, transcends all nationalism. I am an artist. Besides, my grandmother was an American—Miss Hartridge of Boston."

"Oh, yes." Robert was still without fluency. He didn't care who Herr Gustav von Gruening's grandmother had

been, or what his views of his virtues were. He only wanted to get hold of Hildegarde and to tell her that this couldn't go on. Why, the fellow was handsome—beautiful! Even the astounded eyes of a sudden jealousy could perceive that. He carried his long body with a grace at once supple and distinguished. His blond hair was thick and fine. His features were chiseled. His skin was as fine of texture as a girl's. Robert had a vision of him, a violin beneath his chin, a light of melancholy in his violet-gray eyes, playing to Hildegarde in the twilight while she awaited her mother's car. At that vision he felt himself a narrow nationalist to a degree almost murderous.

"I won't detain you," he said stiffly. "I beg your pardon for my intrusion. Miss Storm, I dare say, will not be at the studio to-morrow?"

"Ah, but she will. She is doing a very kind thing for me. She is holding a little tea party and permitting me to play for her guests. It may be that there will be some among them who are still unprejudiced enough to wish me to give instruction."

"Possibly. Good night."

Robert took himself off without further parley. He was aware that it was jealousy and not a too-intense patriotism that informed his manner with rudeness and dictated the "damn his impudence!" which he ejaculated mentally.

Turning up the lights in Florence's studio, he found a lot of mail scattered on the floor, as it had fallen through the letter slit. Notes, circulars, appeals, both to Florence and himself, comprised the most of it. But there was in the collection a letter from his sister herself. He drew up by the dusty, littered table and read. When he had finished reading it, he said aloud and emphatically:

"There is one thing certain. Hilde-

garde will have to get rid of that Hun at once. We can't have these poor refugees insulted daily by the presence of a German at their very door."

For Florence, in the casual manner of the philanthropically inclined, had told him that she was committing to her apartment and to such care as he could compass, a Belgian mother and daughter. She wrote:

Madame Hilloc is an accomplished needlewoman. The child, Genevieve, is rather a dose, but will probably outgrow it. Anyway, it can't be helped. The poor woman has lost her husband and one son, has a grown daughter in England, whence she will sail. Let her have the studio as long—et cetera. I had a week off in Paris last month, and I ran into—et cetera. They ought to arrive about the 20th of March on the—deleted by censor—

It was then the twenty-fourth of the gusty month. There was no sign of Madam Hilloc's arrival. Robert hoped that she had not been torpedoed, both on her own account and on account of the use he meant to make of her in ridding Hildegarde Storm's studio of that outrageously handsome German. Hildegarde, who used to talk such ill-informed nonsense about the Germans!

He pushed his work at Stratford so as to arrive back at the Rembrandt Studios in time for Hildegarde's tea. It was in full progress, he judged from the sounds of mild revelry issuing from her quarters, when he reached home. He inserted the key into his own lock, pushed open the door, and was confronted by a tall, graceful, dark-eyed girl who rose from the window seat.

"Oh, Madame Hilloc!" he exclaimed. Then he paused. This slim, elegant, self-possessed brunette in the clinging satin frock did not conform to his picture of the bereaved mother of children, the war-ravaged widow of a soldier.

"Not Madame Hilloc," an agreeable voice corrected him, picking words with pretty care, "but mademoiselle. De daughter of Madame Hilloc."

"Oh! But where is your mother? And—my sister's letter—I am Miss Barringer's brother——"

"*Charmée*, Captain Barringer," interrupted the stranger amiably.

"Thank you. But my sister referred to you as a child!"

"Not to me—to my sister Genevieve, perhaps. I am Laure, de elder daughter. We tink, *ma mère et moi*, eet ees better she stay in Englan' wit de little one. De ocean, eet make 'er ver' sick. An' me, I am tire' of Englan'. I tink I will like a little Amerique. I come instead. Monsieur ees sorry?"

Robert inhospitably conveyed the impression that he found the unannounced, unauthorized change a mistake. He demanded to know if the accomplishments of Mademoiselle Hilloc would render her self-supporting. Were they those of her mother?

"Non, monsieur. *Ma mère*, she ees de fine needleworker. Me, I am *artiste*. I seeng; I dance. Monsieur will place me on stage, no?"

She came close to him. The fragrance of her clothes, of her hair, enveloped him. Her eyes swam meltingly upon him. Robert disliked her exceedingly. He was one of those temperate Americans in whom obvious sex appeal arouses only the rude desire to remark that he has cut his eyeteeth long, long ago.

However, Hildegard, bidding farewell to her guests at the door of her workshop, the tall figure of Von Gruening hovering behind her, could not divine his feelings toward an elegant and alluring young woman with whom he issued from Florence's room. Intuition failed to inform her that his sole business at the moment was to give a belated luncheon to a Belgian refugee. Consequently, when he called upon her formally in Park Avenue that evening for the purpose of protesting against the enemy-alien presence in her studio, she was not in a docile mood.

"See here, Hildy," Robert began beligerently, "why are you harboring an enemy—a spy, for all you know? It wouldn't be proper at best——"

"You must allow me to be the judge of proprieties," said Hildegard haughtily, remembering the dark-eyed young woman. "And as for Herr von Gruening, the state department has permitted him to leave the camp in Georgia and seems to be satisfied as to his harmlessness. He is an artist—a great artist, I think. Art knows no nationality!"

"Oh, piffle! And in your studio where you work!"

"I don't work in my studio nights or Sundays. That is the time when Herr von Gruening occupies it. I am there very little anyway, nowadays. I run the Red Cross workroom in——"

"I can't understand you! You who were so violent——"

"I can't understand you—you who pretended to be so broad-minded! You were always talking about Schiller and Goethe and how art knew no narrow nationalism!"

"Do you mean to compare this young fiddler with Goethe?"

"Have you ever heard him play? No? But you're ready to judge him unheard!"

"I can't understand your mother's allowing——"

"I am not a child! My mother no longer treats me like a child."

"It would be better if she did," said Robert gloomily.

It was not an auspicious opening for his third marriage proposal, but the sense of Hildegard's urgent need of control hurried him into making it. It was no sooner made than rejected; and it was not until he was taking his stormy leave of her that Robert remembered the Belgian refugee to whose sensibilities the German violinist's presence was supposed to be insulting. He did not recall her existence until Hildegard, as a final shot, remarked:





"My benefactor!" cried Mademoiselle Hilloc, rushing toward Robert. "Gracious Fraulein! Kind angel!" cried Von Gruening, kissing Hildegard's hand.

"And, talking about undesirable residents in the studios, who is it that is occupying Florence's? A very queer-looking person!"

Robert put down his hat.

"That reminds me," he said. "It is chiefly on account of that young lady, Mademoiselle Hilloc, of Antwerp, that your protégé's presence is so undesirable. The poor refugee——"

Hildegard laughed. It was an encyclopedic laugh, containing a concisely expressed and adverse opinion of Belgian refugees, of dark-eyed young women, and of Robert's honesty.

"Oh, very well! If that is the tone you wish to take—you who used to weep over the Bryce report!"

Hildegard laughed again, and he flung out of the house.

In July the adopted parents of the two foreigners had another meeting and another clash. Hildegard absolutely refused to turn Von Gruening out of the studio. Robert absolutely refused

to consider, on Mademoiselle Hilloc's behalf, the offer of a position as companion to a wealthy spinster who wanted some one to exercise her dogs and bear with her tempers. To each, the inference of the other's obstinacy was plain. With angry, miserable eyes they looked upon each other. With angry, miserable lips they taunted each other with inconsistency. Robert found himself saying: "*Damn Goethe! Damn art!*" And Hildegard retorted: "Oh, very well! If that is the illiterate tone you wish to take——"

When, by some miracle of "pull" or persistence, September found Robert, though with eyes as bad as ever, transferred into an overseas detail, he sought Hildegard again, once more to lay himself at her feet. He wasn't going to wait until he returned whole and sound to make sure of her! He wanted to take out insurance immediately against Von Gruening. It was at the studio that he found her, hard at work



upon a symbolic statue to help decorate the line of a Liberty Loan march.

She looked lovely and earnest, tired and sad. He forgot his jealousies, his angers. He forgot Von Gruening. He remembered only that for years he had loved her and wanted her, and that he was going away from her, and might never come back.

The surge of feeling made him eloquent; and the end of the first proposal he had ever made her which had not been preceded by a violent quarrel found her sobbing against his shoulder, his promised wife, his proud, heart-broken love.

By and by they remembered their charges.

"She has intimated—every one has told me—that you and she are to be married. Dearest, you must turn her out of Florence's studio. I can get her a good job if she really wants work—and doesn't put on airs."

"Oh, that reminds me, Hildy! Of course, Von Gruening must give up his free quarters here!"

Hildegard stiffened and withdrew from his embrace. They looked coldly upon each other, their mouths set for combat, for the repudiation, perhaps, of all the tenderness they had just avowed for each other. "Dictatorial," "unreasonable," "crude jealousy"—these were some of the words they banded.

Suddenly the knocker sounded. They tried to assume countenances expressive of calm. Hildegard walked to the door and opened it. She opened it to a tall, smiling Von Gruening, "as beautiful as an angel"—as Robert said furiously to himself—and to Mademoiselle Hilloc, smiling also and looking not unangelic herself.

"My benefactor!" cried Mademoiselle Hilloc, rushing toward Robert.

"Gracious Fraulein! Kind angel!" cried Von Gruening, kissing Hildegard's hand. Then in chorus they cried: "It is all due to you two—our happiness! See——" The German violinist put his arm about the Belgian lady's shoulders possessively. She raised a white hand upon which now sparkled a gold band, brilliantly new. "This morning, at your city hall," they chanted.

"But, but——" cried Robert.

They understood him.

"We are both artists," said Von Gruening grandly. "Art knows——"

"No narrow nationalism," finished Madam von Gruening.

"Except for your ungrudging hospitality," said Von Gruening to Hildegard.

"And yours and your sister's!" cried his wife to Robert.

It was quite evident that they felt that the regrettable incident of a world war was, after all, justified by this glorious outcome. They invited their benefactors to a wedding luncheon. They spoke of their first meeting in the hall. They prattled self-revealingly. And finally they went away to order the wedding feast, leaving their two friends, staring amused and misty-eyed at each other.

"He's a fine fellow, Hildegard," said Robert. "I'm glad you gave him a chance!"

"She's awfully nice," declared Hildegard generously. "And isn't it splendid the way love overcame everything with them?"

"Yes. Art," said Robert convincingly, "knows no narrow nationalism. Thank Heaven for it! It is art that will heal the world of its ills one day!"

"Soon!" prayed Hildegard, and again they clung together.



# The Understudy

By John Barton Oxford

Author of "Ad Valorem," "The Man-Tamer," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

**A blind soldier, a singer, and her maid—the triangle this time a wholly new one, with situations that are touching and unusual.**

EVERYTHING was ready for the quick change between the rendition of "Yesterday," which requires the very latest thing in evening gowns, and that ever-popular old-timer, "Once You Gave Me a Bunch of Clover," which takes a knee-length frock of blue gingham, a simple little sunbonnet, and heelless shoes with straps across the ankles to set it off properly.

The blue gingham frock hung over the back of a chair close to the dressing-room door; the sunbonnet and the shoes with the ankle straps close by. Two fresh blue ribbons, one for either thick plait of light-brown hair that would hang over Rosemary Vinton's shoulders as she sang the last number of her act, lay, smoothly ironed, on the dressing table. Beside them the pot of rouge, with the bit of chamois.

Rosemary Vinton is not billed as "The Little Girl with the Big Voice," without cause. The last clear, ringing notes of "Yesterday" came drifting back even to the dressing room, each word as distinctly enunciated as it would have been in the front of the house. A roar of applause followed it. Annette Tyler, very trim in her severe black gown, her white frilled apron, her crisply starched cap, caught up the blue gingham frock and laid it over her left arm, placed the chair before the dressing-table mirror, and made ready for the tension of the next few minutes.

Footsteps pattered down the passageway from wings to dressing rooms. Rosemary Vinton, skirts of her evening gown held high, came in and threw herself into the chair before the mirror. Annette pounced upon her. Hooks snapped; nimble fingers manipulated evasive buttons; down came the two thick plaits of that light-brown hair; on went the blue ribbons. She wriggled out of the evening gown and into the blue gingham frock as Annette stooped to button the ankle straps of the little heelless shoes. It was breathless work, done silently, with never a wasted movement. Annette finally caught up the pot of rouge and the bit of chamois for the final touch of lip and cheek. And, as she picked them up, her eyes fell on a note there beside them with a penciled memorandum on the margin.

"The soldier will be here at ten tonight, Miss Rosemary."

"Soldier?"

"The one that sent you the note by messenger Monday night. You told me to remind you."

Rosemary Vinton, looking wholly the little girl she was supposed to be when she sang that last number, was at the door on her way back to the stage.

"I'll lay out just a street dress?" Annette asked.

"The new brown one."

Patter of footsteps, hurrying stageward again. Strains of the orchestra growing fainter, modulating into the accompaniment of the song. Rose-

mary's voice, still carrying back to the dressing room clearly, even in its little-girl falsetto:

"Fields that are green, and skies that are blue,  
And a boy and a girl and a kiss or two——"

Annette picked up the evening gown, shook it out, and hung it on a form in one of those big wardrobe trunks that make very respectable closets when they are up-ended. From another form she took down the brown street dress which Rosemary had suggested. She brushed a bit of dust from the skirt. Rosemary Vinton looked her best in that plain brown street dress.

For some reason she had not taken the trouble to analyze, and perhaps could not have analyzed had she tried to do so, Annette wanted Rosemary to look her best when the soldier came at ten that night. She picked up that note on the dressing table and read it again for perhaps the hundredth-odd time, holding it close to near-sighted gray eyes, set on either side of a funny little nose with faint freckles across its bridge.

DEAR MISS VINTON: A year and a half ago you were playing in Ballardville. There was a mass meeting in city hall one Sunday afternoon just after we entered the war, to let the people understand what going into war would mean to them. You were good enough to offer to sing at that meeting.

The little thing you sang that afternoon meant more to me than all the speeches that were inflicted upon us. It sent me "over there."

I wanted to thank you for that song then and there that afternoon, but somehow I couldn't. But now that I have been sent back here, wounded, might I intrude on you some evening at the Garden long enough to do so?

The messenger will bring me your reply. You wouldn't know my name if I signed it, so I will just put myself down,

ONE OF THE BOYS.

The memorandum of Rosemary Vinton's reply was jotted down on the margin:

Thursday evening at 10.

Annette laid the letter back on the dressing table. She liked the simple frankness of it. Something about it had touched her deeply. She smoothed out the brown skirt and rummaged about in a drawer of another big trunk for the brown silk stockings that went with it. To have sent some one "over there;" to have him coming back, wounded, to thank you for it! Annette's gray eyes grew misty. Something tightened in her throat. Romance opened its doors to her—vicariously, it is true, but opened them, none the less.

The distant rumble of applause and the Three Daltons, equilibrists, who followed Rosemary on the bill, scurrying up the passageway to the wings, told Annette the last number was over. Voices sounded just outside the dressing-room door—Rosemary's and a man's.

"Hustle up, girlie! We want to get down there by half past!"

"All right, Freddy! In a minute. Wait out here!"

She came into the dressing room, a little drooping, a little tired; not the Rosemary Vinton of five years ago; still a very beautiful Rosemary Vinton even yet.

"Get me into that brown dress, quick, Annette!" she said rather petulantly, closing the door behind her. "I'm going down to Long Neck with Freddy Parrish and his bunch. Pity Freddy is always in such a rush when he's going anywhere!"

She dropped into the chair before the mirror. Annette began undoing hooks and unbuttoning elusive buttons again.

"But the soldier?" she suggested.

"The soldier? Oh, darn! I forgot him."

"Shall I tell Mr. Parrish you have an engagement at ten?"

That was unusual temerity for Annette. Rosemary Vinton looked up quickly. She scowled.

"You'll do nothing of the sort!"



He pinned the little bronze cross to her waist.

Five years ago she wouldn't have bothered about Freddy Parrish. He wasn't the man of millions she had pictured to herself in those days. But five years, with the crow's-feet they bring, are not to be passed over lightly; and Freddy Parrish wasn't exactly a pauper. He was jealousy itself at times, moreover, with a hair-trigger sort of

temper. If one wanted to remain in Freddy Parrish's good graces, when Freddy Parrish said go, one went.

"And the soldier?"

"Get rid of him somehow."

Annette, pulling up the brown silk stockings, bit her lips.

"Hustle up, girlie!" Freddy Parrish's voice urged beyond the door.

"Not that hat, Annette!"

Annette produced another.

"No, no, stupid! The one with the brown wings."

Annette found it, and finally the particular veil Rosemary wanted.

Rosemary, tucking one small hand beneath Freddy Parrish's arm and laughing lightly at one of his heavy pleasantries, departed down the passageway. Annette stood frowning at the letter on the dressing table. She was still standing there when a call boy tapped on the door and passed in a card.

"Lieutenant Kirk Litchfield," she read, and scribbled beneath the name:

One of the boys, you know.

"Seen Miss Vinton goin' out, didn't I?" the call boy asked.

"I'll tell him she's gone," said Annette. "Where is he?"

"Letter boxes, down by the stage door."

Annette, pity and anger at Rosemary and certain vague qualms possessing her, went down the flight of stairs that led to the stage door.

Two men sat on the bench under the row of little iron letter boxes. Both arose as Annette ran down the stairs. In the dim light of the place she saw one of them was in uniform; the other apparently in some sort of livery.

Cap in hand, the man in uniform took an uncertain step forward. He was tall and straight with thick, fair hair and a boyish face that somehow, for all its fresh color and smoothness, suggested premature age, as the light from the single electric bulb above his face fell more strongly upon it in his one step toward her.

"Miss Vinton, this is mighty good of you to let me come," he said.

One hand was stretched out gropingly, uncertainly, toward her. The man was blind.

Decisions sometimes make them-

selves for us, with none of our own volition, apparently. Such a decision made itself for Annette Tyler there in the half gloom by the stage door of the Garden. Old George Boehling, the stage doorkeeper, had slipped away from his post for the moment. Annette knew where he had gone; down to the corner. Old George was forever slipping down to the corner at this time of night.

The three of them were quite alone—she and the tall, fair boy in uniform and the man in some sort of livery.

With a certain sort of desperate resolution, born of that sudden decision that had made itself for her, Annette took the outstretched hand.

"It isn't mighty good of me to let you come," she said in a voice so firm and quiet she could scarcely believe it to be her own. "It is mighty good of you to come."

The color surged up his neck and into the smooth face. There was nothing to fear from a man who could flush in that fashion. Also, he wasn't wholly at his ease as yet, but trying very resolutely to be so, it was plain, and making it all the worse by trying so hard.

"There are some things I'd like to tell you—alone, Miss Vinton, if I might," he said. "I wonder if you'd mind going somewhere where I could tell them to you—alone?"

"There's the dressing room. We could be all by ourselves there."

"That's awfully nice of you."

"I'll lead you up there, if you'll let me."

"You're mighty good. I was afraid you'd take that note of mine for just one more missive from some forward Johnny. I see you haven't."

"Forward Johnnies," as you call them, don't write that sort of note."

He flushed again.

"Peter," he turned to instruct the man with him, "you toddle along somewhere and amuse yourself for a half

hour or so, and then come back here for me!"

"Very good, sir!"

The other man slipped out of the stage door. Annette led her charge to the narrow flight of stairs, and placed his hand on the iron rail.

She placed him in the chair before the dressing table. She herself sat down on one of the trunks. Howls of delight at the quaint antics of the Three Daltons came drifting back to them. Annette got up and closed the dressing-room door.

"I think I mentioned in my note what you did for me that Sunday afternoon you sang at the mass meeting in Ballardville," he said. "I'd been a pretty irresponsible sort; hadn't found myself yet; hadn't begun to settle down. Just thought of what fun I could get out of life. Pretty risky sort of fun a lot of it was!"

Annette sat on the trunk, both hands pressed tightly together in her lap. The wire-caged light above the dressing table was performing strange antics; wobbling about in crazy fashion before her half-frightened eyes.

"War came, and war didn't mean anything to me except perhaps as a personal annoyance; something that would curtail my fun somewhat. I was a spoiled kid all right, Miss Vinton. Too much money; too doting parents. Old man tried to make me see I'd probably have to bear a hand in the mix-up. Nothing doing! I wasn't going to mix in until I had to. Those speeches that Sunday afternoon affected me in the same way. Struck me as a pack of solemn-faced old calamity howlers trying to egg some one else on to fight their battles for them. Made me sort of hot under the collar. Then you sang. And you did the trick they hadn't managed to accomplish. That little thing you sang—'The Man's Part,' wasn't it?—made me feel pretty small and pretty much ashamed of myself.

"You were mighty lovely that afternoon, Miss Vinton, standing there in the dingy old City Hall, singing to that bunch as if you meant every last word of what you sang. I thought of you a great many times afterward, so mighty lovely, so mighty earnest about it all. I thought of it when I went to the training camp and went through the drudgery you have to go through to get a commission. I thought of it when I finally got that commission. I thought of it when I went across. It always propped me up—the picture of you singing there that Sunday afternoon; so darned sweet, so darned in earnest."

He leaned forward, one elbow on his knees, his hand covering the sightless eyes.

"It stood by me, that picture, when I got into a tight place and came pretty near quitting. But I didn't quit, Miss Vinton! I thought of you, there on the platform of city hall, and I saw it through, and took what was coming to me, and got this for it."

He had fumbled in a pocket as he spoke. Something clanked softly. He was holding out a little bronze cross on a bit of ribbon. There was a little gasping cry from the girl on the trunk.

"So you see, Miss Vinton, this isn't rightly mine at all, but yours. That was why I wanted to see you to-night—to tell you what you did that Sunday afternoon at Ballardville, which you've more than probably forgotten by this time, and to ask you to accept this!"

He rose. He stood by the chair, stiffly erect, one hand held out toward her, with the little bronze cross on its bit of ribbon in his palm.

Rosemary Vinton's laughter as she had gone down the stairs a few moments ago with Freddy Parrish rang jarringly in Annette Tyler's ears. Rosemary's voice, bidding her get rid of this man somehow, brought a flashing anger to the gray eyes. Also, Annette was at once strangely touched and





Annette Tyler, close to him there on the bench in the friendly shadows of the three beeches, lost her head.

quite as strangely frightened by what she had done and whither it was leading.

"Oh, I couldn't, Lieutenant Litchfield!"

"It's really yours!"

"No! Oh, no! I'm—I'm not at all worthy——"

"I think that is for me to say rather than you. It will make me very happy if you will take what is rightfully yours."

Annette's hands were clenched so tightly that the finger tips were purple.

"Mightn't I pin it on you?"

There was a long, deep sigh from the girl. She came over to him and her fingers touched his arm ever so lightly. Fumblingly he pinned the little bronze cross to her waist.

"There! That is where it rightfully belongs."

"I—I shouldn't take it. I—I oughtn't let you do this. I ought to tell you——"

"Where it rightfully belongs—at last," he repeated with quiet emphasis.

8

"Miss Vinton, you have helped me so much already I haven't any right to ask you to do more for me. But I'm going to ask you, all the same. Will you let me come here again?"

"This darkness," he touched his eyes with his finger tips, "is something I can't get accustomed to yet. It frightens me, depresses me. If I might talk to you once in a while——"

Annette heard her own voice saying, not wholly steadily:

"If I can help you in any way, I will."

"You'll let me come again, then?" he said. "To-morrow night?"

"It's so stuffy here in this little room," she demurred. "So noisy, too. And there'd be continual interruptions."

"There are plenty of quiet nooks for us," he said. "Over by the river, for instance. I often get Peter to take me there. Would you mind?"

"I'll come there to-morrow night."

"Fourth bench beyond the University Boat Club's landing float."

"At half past ten."

Some one tapped on the door. Annette opened it to find the Three Daltons going back to their dressing rooms, and the man in livery waiting for his charge.

"You said in a 'arf hour, sir! Hif hi'm hearly——"

Litchfield groped for Annette's hand, found it, raised it to his lips.

"Until to-morrow night," he said in a voice for her ears alone.

"To-morrow night," she whispered back.

The man in livery led him away. Annette stood just inside the doorway, listening to the beat of footsteps down the iron stairs, her fingers touching that little bronze cross that rose and fell with her quickened breath.

They sat together on that bench by the river, the fourth one beyond the University Boat Club's landing float. It had come to know them well these past six weeks. Every evening, save only the overrainy ones, they had sat there together in the friendly shadows of three beech trees between it and the nearest arc light.

A mist shrouded the river—a thin mist that made the lights, moving up and down and across the stream, ghostly splotches of red and green and yellow.

Litchfield was leaning forward, elbows on his knees, his hands tapping lightly together as he spoke.

"That is why I haven't been back to Ballardville; because they have been watching me carefully for the slightest sign of a chance. Dear heart, they tell me there is a chance—a slight one; but a chance, nevertheless."

Annette's heart suddenly seemed to stand still.

"To-morrow they're going to take that chance, slight as it is. They are going to operate on my eyes. And if I should see—if I should——"

Hands clenched together in her lap, she waited.

"I can ask you then, dear, to marry me. I couldn't ask you with this eternal night upon me. That wouldn't have been fair to you. But if they can do what they seem to think there's a long chance of their doing——"

Annette cried out, a pitying, inarticulate cry of that mother love that is in all womankind.

"So, dear, if by that hundred-to-one shot they give me back my sight, we can be happy, I think."

The girl cried out again.

"That wouldn't matter to me," she said. "I could be happy with you always, Kirk. Blind or not, it wouldn't matter to me. Perhaps, even, I should—should be happier with you just as you are."

"Dear God! Such love as that for me!"

"What sort of a love would it be if it wasn't that kind, Kirk?"

"You shall not tie yourself to a blind man."

Annette shivered. She knew well enough she would never tie herself to him sightless or otherwise. She knew that some day the truth must come out. Some day, and none too distant, either. Only, in desperation, she was clinging to this sorry, vicarious, shabbily deceitful romance of hers as long as she might; enjoying to the full her little day of life and love; grimly putting from her mind the thought of the bitter score to be paid by her and by him. Blind, it might go on another week, another month; she might live in this false paradise she had builded for herself that much longer. Otherwise, that hundred-to-one operation successful, it was the end.

The ghostly lights, red and green and yellow, seemed so many accusing eyes, staring at her out of the mist. She caught her breath in a deep, resolute intake. She would tell him the

truth, here and now, on this bench where they had been so happy. It was only a matter of time, anyway, before the truth must be told. She took one of his hands in hers to give her courage. The freckles across the bridge of that funny little uptilted nose stood out sharply against the dead whiteness of her face.

But her courage ebbed as suddenly as it had come. The wonderful sweetness of these past few weeks cried out for just a little longer lease of life. Come what might, she would cling to it as long as she could.

She pressed the big hand in her own slim fingers.

"Don't say that, Kirk! Blind or with your sight——"

"Rosemary, think! You so lovely, with life before you, tied to a blind man!"

"For better or for worse——"

"But if I can see again, dear——"

"World without end——"

His lips brushed her forehead.

"Light in the darkness. I couldn't have stood it, I think, but for you. These evenings here together by the river have been all of life to me!"

She began to tremble.

"I have dreaded to-morrow. I have dreaded it because they told me I must be prepared for disappointment. There can't be any disappointment now. Either way, there can't be any!"

Annette Tyler, close to him there on the bench in the friendly shadows of the three beeches, lost her head.

"No disappointments either way, beloved," she told him, knowing full well that the greatest disappointment of all was imminent.

At noon next day she called up the private hospital where Kirk Litchfield lay in a darkened room. Yes, the operation was over. It had gone off fully as well as could be expected. Results? Too early to say. It was a very long

chance, at the best. It wouldn't be well to be too hopeful as yet.

There was a bitter week when Annette was tortured by a hope she was ashamed of herself for harboring, and by succeeding despair that filled her with an equal shame. On Thursday they were quite sure at the hospital that the operation had been futile; on Friday there was a slight ray of hope. So it went, heartbreaking day after heart-breaking day.

And then, on Tuesday noon it was, there came to Annette, over the wire, the news that the doubt was over. The short end of the bet had won out. The operation had been successful beyond even the most hopeful dreams. Kirk Litchfield would be able to see as well as he ever had.

Annette stumbled out of the telephone booth at the drug store from which she had phoned the hospital, into a crowd on the sidewalk among which she was strangely isolated and alone. Aimlessly, unheeding whither she went, she wandered blocks out of her way. She was late for once at the theater. Rosemary Vinton, her short temper even shorter than usual, was hunting for her costumes.

Annette fell to work, deaf alike to abuse and threats. White-lipped, she faced Rosemary as the latter came into the dressing room after that last number of her act.

"Miss Rosemary!" Annette's voice was wholly untrustworthy. It was all but incoherent.

"Well?" Some explanation of Annette's tardiness at the afternoon performance, Rosemary thought, was coming.

"The soldier——"

"What soldier?"

"The one that sent you a note by messenger some time ago; the one you couldn't keep your appointment with, because you went to Long Neck with Mr. Parrish——"

"Well?"

"I—I went down that night to tell him you weren't here; that you couldn't see him. He was blind. He—he mistook me for you. I let him do it."

She gulped, braced herself, hurried on.

"I did it because—because he was just a nice, clean-cut boy, blind, and so anxious to see you! He gave you—or rather he gave me—a decoration—a little bronze cross that he'd won when he lost his sight, because, as he said in the note, it was what you had sung at Ballardville, at the mass meeting that Sunday afternoon a year and a half ago, that had decided him to do his part."

"For goodness' sake, what are you driving at, anyway? You let him think you were me and took the cross? Is that all?"

Annette shook her head.

"I have seen him since—often. Every night. Always he thought it was you he was talking to. I—I—it went on and on. He was such a nice, quiet boy. There was a slight chance that an operation on his eyes would give him back his sight. The night before it was done he asked me—or you—to marry him; and you—or I, rather—promised to. The operation has been successful. He will see as well as ever."

Annette swallowed hard three times. She sank down on one of the trunks.

"So—so, of course, he'll know that—I that I'm not you, if I go to see him. And he wants me—or you—to go to the hospital. They'll take the bandages off his eyes for a few minutes to-morrow for the first time. He wants you to be there, to be the first thing he sees. Miss Rosemary, he's such a nice boy, so much in love with you, so happy because—because you let him come here that night, and let him give you the little bronze cross for what you had done for him, and so happy because—

because you've talked with him every night on a bench over by the river after you'd got through work here at the theater! Won't you go to the hospital to-morrow when they take the bandages off his eyes? Won't you do that much for him, please?"

Rosemary Vinton started in unbelief at the quivering figure huddled on the trunk.

"Good Lord, girl! Did I understand you to say you'd said I'd marry him if he could see again?"

"You said—or I said—you'd marry him no matter whether he could see or not."

"Why, you little wretch! You wicked little wretch! What on earth ever possessed you to do such a thing? What ever put it into your head in the first place to pass yourself off for me?"

"He was anxious to meet you here that night and give you that cross that he said rightfully belonged to you; and he was blind, and would have been so disappointed after you'd told him to come, not to find you! I—I didn't think at first what it would lead to. I just wanted him to think you were being nice to him, because he thought you were so wholly lovely and so good to him to let him come here. And it went on and on——"

"Who is he anyway? What's his name?"

"Lieutenant Kirk Litchfield."

Rosemary Vinton took a quick step toward the girl on the trunk.

"Litchfield?" she shot out curtly.

Annette nodded.

Rosemary turned suddenly back to the dressing table and began fumbling aimlessly with the make-up things upon it. The one thing about Ballardville that remained in her mind was a picture of the steel works on the outskirts of the dingy little city—big, grimy acres of them, clouded in smoke by day, glaring with flames by night; and owned by a bent little old man who had been



"This is the woman who brought you all those things, Kirk," she said.

pointed out to her on the streets as one of the sights of the city, a man named Litchfield. If Kirk Litchfield was one of that family, Freddy Parrish's worldly possessions would be but a drop in the bucket of this other man's money; this man whom Annette Tyler had promised, in Rosemary's supposed image, to marry.

Presently she swung about to Annette, crumpled up miserably enough there on the wardrobe trunk.

"You've done a very wicked thing! You've got me into a nice mess, haven't you? I ought to let you get out of it the best way you can. I would, if it weren't for this boy you've seen fit to play with fast and loose in my person. If he's as nice and clean-cut as you

say, it will be a shame to hurt him too much. I'm going out to think this over alone. Now get me dressed."

One must be careful. "There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

Annoying slips can frequently be avoided by discreet foresight; a long-distance phone conversation with parties in Ballardville, for instance. Then, one can take a taxi to a private hospital and behold in the flesh the manner of man one has promised to marry, particularly if the patient at the private hospital is well enough to be seen for a few brief moments in a darkened room, where he lies with heavily bandaged eyes.

Rosemary Vinton saw to it that there

would be no slips between this cup and her eager lips. Freddy Parrish was the easiest man in the world to pick a quarrel with. His hair-trigger temper made that certain. Rosemary called him up, quarreled with him, and bade him a cheerful good-by forever.

But there was Annette. One must be sure of Annette. Rosemary settled that last point to her satisfaction after the evening show at the Garden.

"I went to that private hospital this afternoon," she said, as Annette was stripping the blue gingham, knee-length frock from her white shoulders. "They let me see your soldier."

Annette silently folded the gingham frock and put it away in a trunk.

"He is a nice boy, as you said."

Annette bent closer to the open trunk.

"Suppose I could find it in my heart to fall in love with him myself. Suppose I could do that in time—and marry him. What then?"

"I'd be glad," said Annette. "So glad! So happy!"

"And you? This part you've played in it all? How about that?"

"I'd just—just step aside, and be happy—for him! It is you he has loved from the first, of course. He has never seen me. He thought I was you. I don't count!"

"You're sure of that?"

"Sure!"

"And you're sure you want me to marry him?"

Funny uptilted nose aquiver, its nostrils suddenly distended, Annette stood up.

"If you make him happy," she said with an ominous calmness in her tones.

"Don't you think I can?"

Annette looked the other woman over slowly, searchingly, deliberately.

"Yes," she said at last.

At ten o'clock on the morning of her wedding day the telephone began jan-

gling its summons in Rosemary Vinton's apartments. Some last minor detail of the ceremony at St. Chrysostom's at high noon, no doubt, that Kirk had remembered and was phoning her about. She was very lovely, very eager, very much the sort of woman any man might well be proud to claim as his own, as she picked up the receiver.

But it wasn't Kirk Litchfield calling her, after all. It was St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

Was this Miss Rosemary Vinton? A girl had just been taken from the river more dead than alive, just above the University Boat Club's landing. She was at the hospital now, unconscious. Twenty-one or two, slender, a hundred and ten pounds or thereabouts, light hair, blue eyes, faint scar on left temple, name of Rosemary Vinton stamped on band of brown skirt she wore.

Could Miss Vinton perhaps tell them, from this description, who the girl was? If not, would it be too much trouble for Miss Vinton to come to the hospital and see if she could identify her?

Rosemary told them she would come to the hospital.

November can be hoyden or nun, according to the mood. November was the nun, placid, calm, untroubled, that morning as Rosemary stepped into the taxi. The sunshine was so warm she lowered the taxi windows. Last gorgeous leaves were coming down from the trees; pavements were clean-washed by yesterday's rain. November, the nun, breathing a holy peace upon the world!

Chin in one palm, troubled eyes looking out on all the peace that should have been hers to-day but was not, Rosemary huddled in an angle of the taxi cushions.

When Annette had left her, weeks since, Rosemary had given her some of her clothes. But Annette might well have given them to some one else. Her name on that skirt band might mean



everything or nothing. A hundred and ten pounds, light hair, blue eyes, faint scar on left temple, twenty-one or so! The description of a hundred girls!

But it was Annette Tyler there on the cot in the quiet ward at St. Bartholomew's, with the gold of the November sunshine coming through the long window to make a shining rectangle of light on the polished floor beside her. Still unconscious; meek, unaccusing; eyes still half open; freckles standing out too sharply across the bridge of the funny little nose; a doctor still working over her.

Rosemary heard her own voice speaking. It seemed to come faintly from some great distance.

"Yes. This is Annette Tyler. My maid, up to six weeks ago. I know of no reason——"

Her wedding day! St. Chrysostom's at high noon! And this at half past ten!

She drew out some bills. They rustled crisply. November, the nun, breathed her peace through the open window.

"Give her a private room. Do everything for her."

Annette's half-open lids fluttered. A sigh which was something like a soft, tired moan came from the cot. The doctor lifted the small head higher on the pillow. Rosemary stumbled out of the ward.

The car drew up to the curb before St. Chrysostom's, blood-red ivy leaves clinging to the Gothic buttresses of the wall. Rosemary and Kirk Litchfield got out, and the friend of Kirk Litchfield's and the friend of Rosemary's who were to set down their names as witnesses.

A light, bantering word or two there on the curb; a ripple of soft laughter. They went inside.

In the glow of lighted candles on the altar, St. Chrysostom's rector awaited

them at the chancel rail. They ranged themselves before him. The faintest, haunting notes from the organ; a clock outside booming the hour of noon; the November sunshine heightening the habiliments of St. Chrysostom with miter and crosier in the stained-glass window high up in the chancel wall.

Flutter of leaves; softer glow of candles. The clear-cut tones of the rector's voice:

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony——"

Among the glowing candles on the altar Rosemary saw plainly Annette's face, funny little nose with the too-distinct freckles across the bridge of it, lying on the pillow of the cot at St. Bartholomew's. So meek; so tired; so wholly resigned; so wholly without a hint of bitterness or accusation in it!

"Which is commended of St. Paul to be honorable among all men; and therefore is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly——"

Annette's voice saying, above the ripple of the organ and the rector's sonorous reading: "I will just step aside."

"But reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God."

Annette's ominously calm voice again, back there in the stuffy little dressing room at the Garden Theater: "If you can make him happy!"

"Into this holy estate these two persons present now come to be joined."

\* Rosemary's fingers closed so tensely on Litchfield's arm that he turned to her in alarm.

"If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace."

Rosemary stiffened. Kirk Litchfield

said something to her under his breath. She did not hear it. She drew herself up.

"It can't go on, this marriage," she said between clenched teeth.

When the flutter her words had caused was over; when Kirk Litchfield, very silent, very stern, yet infinitely tender and gentle, had led her out of the church, and they stood once more on the curb by the car, with the blood-red ivy leaves behind them on the Gothic buttresses of St. Chrysostom's walls, she turned to the other pair of the little party.

"Please let us be alone," she begged them.

"Rosemary, dear, in the name of Heaven——" Litchfield began.

She pulled herself together with an effort that seemed to take all her will.

"Kirk, I did it—I said that—because I am not the woman you love."

He stared at her in unbelief, as if she had suddenly lost her reason.

"You are Rosemary Vinton, aren't you, dear?" he asked very quietly.

"I am Rosemary Vinton, yes."

"That is enough for me, dear."

"Kirk, listen to me! Kirk, think hard before you answer. Which did you love best, the Rosemary Vinton who sang that afternoon in the city hall at Ballardville, or the Rosemary Vinton you came to see at the Garden, the Rosemary Vinton who let you pin the decoration on her, the Rosemary Vinton who sat on the bench every night

and talked to you—and—and made you love her? Which one? Tell me!"

"Dear heart, I shan't have to think hard at all to answer that," he said. "I never really knew you, of course, until you came to me on that bench over by the river, bringing me such love and courage and faith!"

She stepped into the car.

"Come with me, then!" she said. And to the chauffeur: "St. Bartholomew's Hospital!"

Mystified, because all the way thither she had been silent, he suffered himself to be led through long, clean halls. They stopped at last before the door of a private room. Rosemary lifted her face to his.

"Kirk——"

"Yes, dear."

"Kiss me—once! Kiss me—good-by!"

He would have kissed her far more than once, but she held him away.

"I am not the woman who brought you that wonderful love, Kirk, nor the courage nor the faith!"

She bent her head, her lips pressed tightly together. She groped blindly for the knob, found it, swung the door open. November sunlight, coming through the window to glorify that bare, cleanly, shining little room, fell full upon Annette Tyler in the narrow white bed.

"This is the woman who brought you all those things, Kirk," she said,



# The Great Conspiracy of Silence

By Anthony M. Rud

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

Here's a new humorist come to town. More of his work will appear in SMITH'S.

ACCORDING to old Russell, women has been the real reason why the so-called human race ain't hanging by its tail from a cage in the zoo and fine-combing its fur in odd moments for edification and edibles. I ain't disagreeing. I love the ladies—or at least I used to before Martha made me concentrate on one of them. Russell says that woman's influence is civilizing, but if I was a judge I'd can his evidence, him now being cultivated by his third better half, and still the worst crab in the office.

Lex Phelps, too, would of been dang good rebuttal, the first time I seen him. That was over at Shorty Langford's, the time Shorty give his jamboree on account of hitting a streak of pure, solid bituminous up on his eighty-acre stump desert near Antioch, Illinois.

Shorty was what you might call a nice safe middle ground. Down at the magazine he was old Russell's associate editor. Outside of this here abandoned farm he owned—which I take it was a legacy, back taxes and all—he didn't have enough so as he was too proud to know me, and still he was an important-enough sub so that Lex Phelps felt in duty bound to come around and help him rejoice. Lex owned *All That's New*.

It was just like Shorty to have females. Another guy would of staged a whiz of a stag, but not Shorty. He drags in all the nice ladies he knows, and from the bunch that's there I dope that he's done pretty much the same

amount of fussing as he done editing. If I'd 'a' known, I wouldn't—but neither would Lex Phelps.

The first time I claps my eyes on him he's standing mournful alongside the sectional bookcase. He's pretending to follow the chatter of a couple of cuties who are sitting on the davenport six feet away, but seven or eight guys with broader shoulders are in between, and I grin at his attempt.

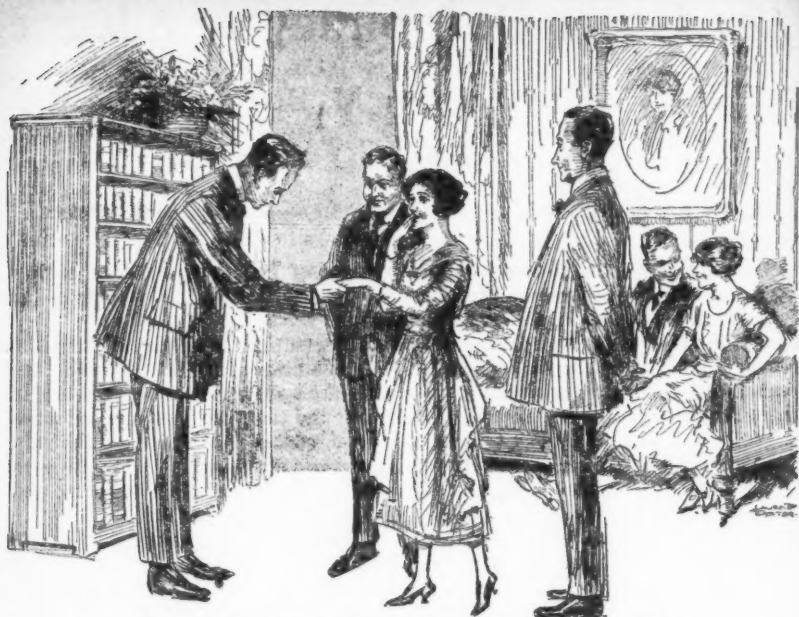
Then comes the disaster. Hervie Mitchell and Bun Palmer sail around from the alcove with Letty Parsons. They run into Lex, or else they wouldn't of seen him at all. Lex apologizes for living, but Herv gets him by the arm and gives him a knock-down to Letty and Bun.

"Meet Miss Letty Parsons and my friend, Bun Palmer. Bun used to be my roommate in college." Herv is a decent sort and always gives everybody a square chance.

Lex is attacked by plain blue funk. I'll bet he never even noticed that Letty is near as homely as I am. All he seen was that he was getting introduced to a skirt, and this scared him so bad that he missed Bun Palmer altogether.

"Indeed?" he says, smiling silly, and bowing over Letty's hand. He's so fussed he don't know east from west.

It wasn't insult, naturally. Not even Herv thought so, him being wise to just what kind of a denatured cipher Lex is socially. The kid and her two escorts busted right out laughing, though, and then Lex seen what he'd said. He went



"Indeed?" he says, smiling silly, and bowing over Letty's hand.

red all of a sudden, and didn't stop there. His face seemed to be getting close to the color of a pickled beet. He gave a funny kind of a choking noise, turned, and run out of the room like he'd heard the starter's gun in the hundred.

I ain't giving any reasons for what I did, because it was just plain hunch. Maybe I was thinking how I used to get fussed myself when a girl looked at me. Anyway, in spite of the fact that Lex is a good fraction of a century past the time when a nice dame ought to make a monkey out of him that easy, I legs it after. While he's fussing around for his coat and hat I catch up. Then I pretend I don't like the crowd, either, knowing I can always square myself if anybody hears me say it.

Lex ain't quite ready to talk, so I lead him to a nice quiet bar. There he

stutters over a glass of Moselle, and I get better acquainted with this guy I been selling pictures to indirectly for so long. He ain't a bad sort, though I knows right off that him and me ain't going on no long hikes or fishing trips together. When we bust up, though, he's forgotten the worst of his embarrassment, and I've had two good high balls that he's paid for in spite of my coin lying on the bar. I figure he'll feel better—like as if he was squaring something—so I don't kick.

By the next day I'd forgot all about it, except for telling Martha about what he'd said to Letty, but I guess Lex hadn't. When I make my stop at the office of the magazine, I find a sealed note there for me from Lex.

It ain't business at all, though. From the way I slants it first on reading, the letter is some sort of an invitation. Leastwise it looks like the kind of in-

vite you might give somebody you was afraid might get mad or something.

Miss Serena Pitkin and Mr. Lexington Square Phelps would be honored by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Lew Marcus—

And it names tea at the Blackstone! It's the first time in my life that anybody ever invited me to anything weaker than claret lemonade, and also it's the first time indulging in the Blackstone has ever been put up to me serious. I don't think much about it then, though.

That evening when Martha is washing the dishes and I'm wiping I remember the letter, and pull it out.

"How'd you like to go to the Blackstone to-morrow afternoon at five and have tea?" I asks, kind of joking like, expecting Martha to shy a plate at me or something.

Instead of that she jumps so quick she splashes suds on the floor, and then sniffs when she sees me grinning. For a second she doesn't answer, but some color she only uses when she's mad comes surging up in her cheeks.

"You give me a start for a second," she says, planking down a plate hard enough so it pretty nearly broke. "I thought maybe you meant it. I—I did go there once with Mrs. Kramer, two years ago, and I—"

"Wasn't joking at all," I assures her, solemn. Then I shows her the bid. It hadn't been nothing but a laugh with me up till then, but when I see her blue eyes get wide, and her fingers tremble, I know something about it hits her off different from the way a man gets such things. From then on I listens, while Martha starts a monologue, kind of excited. It's all about the fact that she ain't got nothing to wear, and so on. I manage after a bit to ask her why she can't wear the white voile she got for Billy Garner's lawn party the last summer, and that lets me in for a dissertation on what she'll have to do to the skirt.

It ain't until I've phoned Lex and we're on our way to the hotel that she even asks me who Serena Pitkin is.

"Oh, just a young flapper—friend of mine," I answers, gay and careless.

I ain't met Serena then myself, but when Lex and she meets us in the lobby I feel Martha grip my arm the way she always does when she wants to giggle and can't. Serena looks even to me a little bit like the sister of the Spirit of '61, or something like that. She's straight up and down like a tin soldier, but you see it ain't because she wants to walk that way but because of her apparatus. Stays and bones starts up under her high collar, and continues down beyond where it's polite to speculate about. Her thin, lined face, set on top of this array of bows and flounces, ain't any too cordial, and the specs on the end of a buttonhook she keeps poking over her nose don't help much. She just bows jerky when Lex introduces us, but this don't bother Martha. She always gets along with anybody, mainly, I think, because she smiles so infectious nobody tries to stop her smiling.

Orange pekoe and almond cakes and all what goes with it ain't my forte. I prefers most any other line of eats and beverages. Martha, though, takes to it like a chink waiter takes to what's left of your chow-mein order, and it ain't long before Serena and Lex is listening to Martha. Far as I can figure, Serena's part is mostly nodding and jerking the buttonhook specs up and down, but Martha don't seem to mind. After a bit I kind of draws Lex a little apart, knowing that he's as much out of it as I am.

He don't tell me much about himself, but from the way I dope it out there ain't any too much to tell. He's been to Harvard, and then went across and spent two years at Oxford. Near as I can figure, he spent most of his time reading, because he don't know

nothing about sports at all. Since coming into his fortune he ain't done a thing except sit around and be ornamental, and go to places once in a while with Serena. Having had one good look at her I can see why he's getting a little bit hungry for human companionship.

The worst of it is that he don't seem to have no notions about doing anything at all. The idea just ain't occurred to him, I guess. It's kind of hard chinning with a guy who ain't got any wants in the whole world, so I just sets and tells him yarns about my business. Some of them don't get across, but I keep on. Finally, when all my best ones have been shot, I ask him why he don't get married. That makes him shudder.

"Don't speak of it, pray!" he begs. "My life would be a turmoil of constant unhappiness!"

I agrees with him silently, but am curious to know how he's got that figured. Far as I can see, it's the girl who'd have to do most of the worrying.

"I have many married acquaintances," he continues. "I have visited them a few times, and always they desire to make a match for me. It is nothing but a great conspiracy of silence, for though married men and women seem always to wish to see others in the same state, I can deduce how poorly all of them get along. They quarrel and bicker constantly. Besides, in marriage there is always the possibility of children and——"

"I should hope so," I comments dryly.

"Oh, but children—and especially babies—annoy me exceedingly! I just cannot stand them. They grate on my nerves! I always endeavor, when I am choosing an apartment, to select one in which babies are held in disfavor."

"But where does this conspiracy dope come in?" I asks.

"The married people are all in it," he says. "They try to make a match for you, and tell you all about the happiness of matrimony, and don't say a word about the awful annoyances one must face. To hear some of them tell it——"

"Oh, yes," I admits, "there's a rub now and then, but mostly it's about the distribution of the family kale. You got so much of that——"

"Kale?" he questions. "Something like Swiss chard, you mean?"

"No, jack! Money!" I exclaims, and then go telling how poor folks have to scrape to skin by with the butcher and other insistent guys. I see his point, though. There's times and places when even a deacon in the jumpers is a natural-born liar. Did you ever hear a man—or a girl either, for that matter—who was swimming around, tell the gink up on the springboard who was still sporting a dry bathing suit that the water was cold enough to freeze the whiskers off'n a brass monkey? No, neither did I. It ain't done. "Come on in, the water's fine," is the regular formula, and it's worked to cover more kind of conditions than the cosine A-plus-B thing in trig.

Likewise with matrimony. I ain't aiming to knock the blissful state none—if Martha and I got annulled or something, it'd take about two shakes before she'd have me down on the rug again, even if my knees ain't so springy as they was back in '01. And without developing no elephantery of the ego, I can say I dope it out she'd slip me the wink about half a hour faster now than she did the first time, the reason being partly what Lex didn't even suspect; both of us'd be dang lonesome without somebody handy to scrap with who's gotta listen.

That last ain't the whole reason, either. I kind of suspects sometimes when Martha's eyes get quiet and serious and we talks about Jimmy—who's





Far as I can figure, Serena's part is mostly nodding and jerking the buttonhook specs up and down, but Martha don't seem to mind.

just now in his fresh year at Andover—that the scrapping that all married folks does is only a kind of by-product, like the scum that comes to the top when Irish stew boils. Some people never skim it off at all, but the stew's all right either way.

I wouldn't be letting Europe at large in on all this, either, if it wasn't for what followed. The minute our yellow cab swung away from the hotel that

evening, Martha nodded quick and precise like she does when she's made up her mind once and for all.

I'm wondering how much this is going to cost me, so I tries a little prod.

"I don't suppose you saw real much of Lex Phelps," I ventures, "but what do you think of my flapper and the way she entertains?"

"That terrible woman!" she exclaims. "Oh, the tea was enjoyable,

and I don't mind meeting Miss Pitkin—just so as I can enjoy talking to you all the more. Mr. Phelps? Well, he needs just two things, and needs them in a hurry. One is to get into the army for a while and the other is to get married as soon as he comes back, so she won't catch hold of him again."

"If the American army was made up of Lex Phelps, I'd rather be a German," I says dryly. "I don't think they could even use his physique in the inkwell corps, let alone in the trenches."

"Well, I don't know but what the army would make something of a real man of him," she argues, "but I guess that'll take care of itself. He's down at the end of the first class, and he can't get exemption. His turn'll come. Meanwhile——"

"The great conspiracy of silence!" I howls, thinking how well Lex has it all doped out, even if he is simple. Of course, I have to explain, and as I go on, I see Martha's mouth tighten up. Knowing Martha, I see the prospect is dang bad for Lex Phelps.

"Miss Pitkin is making a trip to Northampton next Tuesday," she remarks. "I have asked Mr. Phelps to take dinner with us, and he's coming."

"Ha!" I exclaim, scenting the plan. "Who's going to be the goat?"

"Both of them," she answers, making it clear as black-bean soup. And it's all I can get out of her just then, though I even tries guessing what dame she'll try to get him interested in.

On Sunday the cat comes out of the bag, so to speak.

"It's Marion Grimes!" admits Martha, reluctantlike.

"Ouch! The Incurable Kiddo! Why on earth did you pick her? Lex will throw a——"

"Hush!" says Martha. "Now, you do it my way, will you? I don't want you to tell Mr. Phelps how grand a little girl Marion is, whether you think she is or not."

"Not!" I puts in. Marion is a beaut being all that's warm and inviting looking in yellow-haired, blue-eyed baby dolls. The only trouble is that them big, innocent eyes is camouflaging two black little devils that are ready to raise Ned and all his ancestors with a motor plow if necessary. In her five feet nix—oh yes, and three inches or so of spindly heels—she's got more misdirected pep than the whole smudge of jazz dance pieces that's come out since "Pony Boy."

Last time Martha and I was out with her was down at the Edelweiss Gardens the night we first heard that the Yanks was going to mix in. Without even a seidel of Pommery to start the machinery, she got up on the platform and gave us the late lamented cancan, just by way of celebration. And they let her get away with it, probably cause they thought she was a war baby, or something. Having her for Lex! The notion intrigued me, as the writers say.

"Now I want you to put aside any prejudices you may have at the moment," advises Martha, and from the steely glint in her eyes I sees she's dead in earnest. "Drop around casual and see Mr. Phelps this afternoon. Kid him all you want to first, and then tell him you got something serious on your mind. Ask him if he'll help you out. He'll do it too, I think."

I sighs and gives up. Might as well swallow the pill. "Shoot!" I says, laying back and closing my eyes. Martha don't wait for no further invitation. For a solid half hour she fills me up with dope that I'm to pass on to Lex, and I got so much of it on board that I have to take on a little ballast to keep me straight to keel. I slips into the pantry and tucks one stiff shot of stuff that had its yellow label pasted on before the hog-market assassination. Then I comes back and stops in the doorway, holding my hat.

"You ought to have Dave Warfield

or Al Reeves or somebody like that for a husband," I says, as a parting shot. "How do you figure I can say all of that and keep a straight face? That takes acting."

"Tush!" she exclaims, tossing her head scornful. "I got a *real* job. I got to tell the same thing to Marion and make her believe it!" Which *must* have been some job, take it from me!

Some fellahs would of said Lex had seen enough, the way he about half gave me a handshake when I hunted him up at the Cliff Dwellers. His trouble wasn't that, though, and I had him numbered.

"De—delighted beyond measure, Mr. Marcus," he says, flushing a little, and weighing back and forth on one foot uneasylike. I can see he's wondering how Serena got away with us.

"Where's the chaperon to-day?" I queries pleasant. "Out giving a lecture on Hegel?"

"Serena?" he stammers. "No—no, she really does not care much for philosophy, really. She—"

"Oh, hang it!" I busted in. "Never mind. I don't care. I come to ask you to do me a favor, Lex."

His eyes lighted up at this. I guess it's the first time anybody ever sounded like they thought he *could* do much of anything.

"Oh, it is granted before you ask, Mr. Marcus!" he exclaimed, kind of clasping his hands excited. "What is it?"

"My name is Lew," I says. "Forget the Mr."

"All right, Lew."

"It's a sad case," I goes on. "Nice girl, too. Don't know what's got into her, but it's just up to me to try and save her!"

His eyes got wide, and he opened his mouth as if he was going to say something.

"Er—ah—is she—ah—loose?" he asked, making as much fuss about get-

ting that out as if he was going to get pinked for defaming a lady's character.

"Oh, no!" I says, acting shocked. "Just the opposite! Marion is a lovely, sweet girl, and a peach if there ever was one. Only she's too spiritual. Going to be a nun, the wife tells me, and I don't like it. I hate to see them wasted like that."

"Yes, it is too bad sometimes," he says, reflective. "Better, of course, than what I first imagined you meant, though."

"Oh, yes, I suppose so," I agrees. "She thinks she's a man-hater, too. Personally, I believe it's just because she ain't never had a chance to meet any real nice men—like you, for instance. I don't want you to get the notion that I'm planning to get you married or nothing, or her, either, for that matter. That's something people has got to do for themselves. Anyway, there's about as much chance of making love to her as there would be to a glass of lemonade."

"Then—then just what is it you wish me to do?"

"Let me ask her over to the same dinner you're coming to at my flat, and then try to get her to talk. Liven the poor girl up a little bit. A snappy guy like you can make her cheerful for an evening and maybe get her thoughts off'n that cloister for a while. It'd be doing a real social service, I believe." Martha had posted me on that last sentence, and it was a clincher, I guess.

"Of course, I must acquiesce and attempt to do my best," he answers, kind of looking worried a little, but pleased at the same time. "Of course, you must realize that I am not so wonderfully at home in the society of young ladies, myself."

"Nonsense!" I breaks in. "It ain't like I was asking you to a chorine's room, or something like that. This kid is just so slow a freight she'll figure you to be the Twentieth Century, and

I think you can get her going for a little while, anyway. Maybe at first you can pretend you are thinking of studying theology, or something. Then work her into regular dope as fast as you can."

"I—I shall give it my best thought and endeavor, Lew," he says. "Let's see, was that Tuesday next?"

According to schedule, Lex got there first. When he come up I was busy mixing, and took him right out into the kitchen with me. Martha was having the things brought in by the caterer, so there wasn't any cooking going on.

"Liquor?" whispered Lex, paling a trifle, when he saw the colored stuff in the bowl.

"Naw, soft stuff—oh, there is just a little light claret and so on in it for flavoring," I admits. "Try a glass and see if it's right yet."

He drinks, making a wry face. "It's—it's strong, I think," he gasps.

"Not enough sugar," I answers. That ain't the real reason, though. In that glass he drank I seen to it that there was about three fingers of stuff strong enough to curl your hair, besides the punch. I puts in some more sugar, though, and then, when he's looking away, I fixes him up another glass. "Try this now. I think it's more sweet, maybe."

He does, and tries hard to look pleasant while he's gulping it down, but it ain't hard to see that him and booze ain't rubbed elbows much.

"That—that claret makes my head swim a little. I think I won't try any more just now."

I let him off, cause I saw I'd done what I wanted to. Then Marion come. The wife signaled to the caterer, and then went to take her wraps. It was lucky she done it that way, because the seal cape with ermine collar ain't the kind nuns usually wear. Inside the coat, though, she's all right. The gown maybe only cost a couple of hundred,

and it might have been another inch tighter if she'd been planning on being a mummy or something. She's left off the sparklers, however, and put lace and so on in front and on her neck so as she looks real prim—for Marion. Most times in the evening she looks like what Ziegfeld would do if he got nerve enough.

I goes back for Lex. He's kind of leaning careless against the doorway of the kitchen, and when I comes, he smiles—not the cold, kind-of-embarrassed grin he usually wears, but a regular smile. "I—I got thirsty," he says, "and I wondered if it would be all right if I helped myself to another glass of punch?"

I looked him over careful first. "Yes, I guess so." He ain't showing any signs of staggers, and he ain't missing his t's yet, so I dope him up another. This goes down without a wink, and he don't say a word about it being strong.

"To-morrow," he exclaims, drawing a deep breath till his thin coat nearly busts, "I'm going to buy a bottle of claret. There's nothing like it to relieve the feeling of ennui." There ain't, either, but I don't tell him that he'd better buy his claret with three stars on the bottle neck.

Then I lead him in, nonchalantlike, telling him about the way some bandits hung up a kayo on our alderman the night before. That is, I got about halfway through, when I gets my first real close-up of the Incurable Kiddo. I gasp. She's got on a hymn-book expression that looks like Saint Paderewski or like somebody just told her about the note what fills in the lost chord. She's setting straight on the edge of our mulberry davenport, her arms crossways in her lap, and maybe half an inch of satin pump showing instead of the eleven inches—but maybe Lex wouldn't like to say anything about that now.

Anyway, she rises and bows deco-

rous, like a "vodeville" violinist, when Martha does the honors. Lex? My gosh! He looks at her a second, solemn as an owl, and I thinks he's going to blush and fall down or something. Does he? Not on your life! My hooch fixed that, I guess. A smile begins tugging at his mouth when he sees our little nun, and he steps up carelesslike.

"Delighted to have you know me, little girl!" he sings out, grabbing both her hands.

Right there I thought Marion was going to do the falling down. Her eyes got so wide they looked like blue bull's-eyes on a target, but she let out just the first little corner of a giggle, and then was as demure as pie again. I see her look reproachfully at Martha next minute, when Lex strolls over and straddles the piano bench, but my hooch-man don't give her no chance to do no talking.

"Come on over here, Miss Grimes," he invites. "You play, don't you? While these old folks are getting ready for dinner let's have a tune!" This was followed by some more chatter, innocent as ladies' day at a ball game, but Lex seemed to have forgotten that he was talking to a nun. When she did get over there beside him he edged away about a foot and a half, but stuck. Seeing this, I got Martha out.



When she did get over there beside him, he edged away about a foot and a half, but stuck.

Back there in the kitchen we done a lot more listening than preparing for dinner. First she played a lot of chords. All the while Lex is talking about what a beautiful dress she's wearing, and how it just matches the color of her eyes, and so on. I leaned close to Martha's ear and bet her six bits that Lex must have got all that line out of a book. I made up my mind that where some was good, more would be better, and I mixed up one more dose to slip him when I got the chance.

"Nothing doing!" says Martha when she sees it. "Heavens! Do you want him to try to kiss her the first night?"



I don't see the harm, as Marion seems to be right in her element, so to speak, posing as a little sub-deb who don't know what to make of the wicked, wicked world. The chords slip into a hymn, and first thing I know she's begun singing something she must have learned at church, though when she ever went, I don't know.

The first verse got about half along and then there was a kind of gasp and a noise like smothering.

"Not that kind!" says Lex, bold and peremptory. "I like syncopated music!" And then I leans around a corner, lamping them. The nut has his hand over Marion's mouth and is thumbing through the jazz pieces on the piano with his right. Marion says something I can't catch, but she plays some of the other kind. Somehow or other she ain't got her regular snap and dash on the keys, and I think it pretty bum playing. While it's going on, though, nothing else can, and Martha and I work.

Then they come out to dinner, and I noticed Marion has a little spot on each cheek, beginning just where the rouge starts to fade, and that she kind of flashes a steely look at Martha whenever she can get her eye. Martha sees, too, but from then on she don't look at Marion.

The Incurable Kiddo is a sport, though. Right through to the finish she keeps her part, and though she seems to liven up a little toward Lex every half hour, as the meal gets through he ain't quite so peppy himself. I want to give him that drink that is waiting out there, but Martha won't let me.

"He has had enough," she says firmly. "No woman wants a man to be drunk when he falls in love with her." So I let them be.

After dinner I takes them for a ride around through Jackson Park in my brother's flivver, and we stop just till it gets too chilly, out by the lake. The

cold breeze somehow stops Lex's line, and he don't say much while we are coming back. I figure maybe he got fresh or something out there and Marion told him something, only Lex ain't the kind to think of anything out of the way even when he's real pickled, which he ain't.

All the way back, Marion tells of men she knows who have gone into the service, and what rank they have, and what they are doing at this camp or that camp. I think myself that this is crabbing the game, but she sticks with it even when Lex breaks in with a remark about him thinking that church people didn't countenance war nowadays.

The last half mile is silence, as Hamlet says, except for the talking Martha can do over my shoulder. When we stop and go up I get that sinking sort of a feeling that I would call a poker hunch, except for the fact that it's always wrong and I usually win at poker. I feel in my bones that this simp of a Lex isn't going to say another word, and won't know enough to go home, but as I said, my bones got their feeling nerves put in all backward.

Almost the second we gets in the flat, Lex takes Marion by the arm and leads her right up to us. I see him stiffen, and his knees tremble a little, and I gets a little scared myself.

"Miss Grimes," he says, back on his culture nag again. "You have told me a lot about your friends who have gone into the army, and about their rank. What is the highest any of them are yet?"

"Why—er—lieutenant, I guess—second lieutenant, I guess," she stammers, looking kind of queer around the eyes.

"And have any of them promised you any souvenirs from the great war?" he goes on stiffly.

"Why, no. None of them have gone to France yet."



"Well," and he throws out his chest a full half inch. "I am going into the next camp at Fort Sheridan, and I'm coming out a captain!" he says. "Then I'm going over, if the war lasts, and I'm going to bring you back a German helmet! Will you—er—" and for the first time he really stammers a little.

"Could you—er—delay your going into a convent until after I get back?"

Martha pinches my arm, and I take the hint. About twenty minutes later by the clock he comes and says he's going to take Marion home. She don't look much happier than before, kind of panic-strickenlike, but I notice the hair is pulled out of her net in one or two places. Lex grabs my hand, and I feel the palm is all moist and his fingers twitchy.

"I don't know how to thank you, Lew," he says, kind of husky.

I wave him on, because it ain't exactly the place for post-mortems.

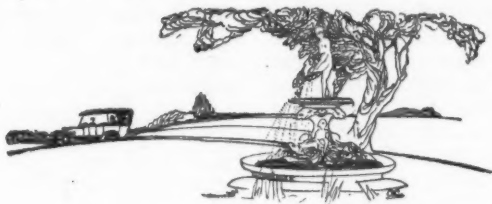
About an hour and a half later Marion calls up. I'm in bed but I ain't through chuckling yet. Martha runs and grabs the receiver, and I hear her gasp.

"Good Lord!" she says. "Congratulations, you dear girl!" Then, "Tell that to Lew, will you?"

I stand up for my medicine.

"I just told Martha what I thought of her!" announces Marion's voice, kind of dry and queer. "You, too! I'm engaged to be married, and I don't even know his middle name yet! And Martha told me he was going to study for the ministry!"

"Well," I answers, sparring for something to say in my amazement, "maybe it won't take. And if it does, there's always plenty ministers without having one in the family."



## YOUNG LOVE

YOUNG Love came down the street last night,  
Oh, golden-winged and gay!  
I heard him whisper in his flight,  
And all the street lamps were alight  
To guide him on his way.

But here against my window glass  
I laughed to see him so.  
"Yes, you may turn your head and pass,  
You've called too many an eager lass  
And only to her woe!

You've paused too often on your flight,  
And you may go your way!"  
Young Love came down the street last night.  
—Why is my heart so wild and light  
And yet so sad, to-day?

ELLEN M. JANSON.



# Jane Wins A Victory

By  
Rebecca  
Hooper  
Eastman

Author of "The Fulfillment," "The String-  
Bean House," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

The "course of true love"—and a selfish arrogant mother.

OUTSIDE, on the west veranda, in two chintz-upholstered wicker chairs, sat Mrs. Cadwallader and her friend for fifty years, Jane Selfridge. It was the first time that they had seen each other alone since Mrs. Cadwallader's husband's death, and Mrs. Cadwallader was telling Miss Selfridge about the end. Indeed, Mrs. Cadwallader had insisted on going over it all, down to the smallest detail, to each of her callers. Instead of the story's becoming more sketchy each time, it grew increasingly vivid, as if she was holding something back that wouldn't bear telling.

Mrs. Cadwallader's attitude toward her husband's death was the more strange because she was preëminently a pampered person. Born with the traditional silver spoon in her mouth, she had, in the course of the opulent years, seen that spoon change to platinum. Furthermore, she accepted platinum as her just due.

"I knew that Brian was very low, but I had no idea that he was going," she confided to Jane Selfridge. "It was two o'clock in the morning, and I was lying on the couch in his dressing room, trying to relax and hope and pray and imbue him with some of my own good,

strong constitution—a sort of spiritual blood transfusion, Jane, when——"

"How about some lemonade, people dear?" inquired a sweet and carefully casual voice.

Inside the door, in an attitude of highly nervous attention, Ann Cadwallader had been waiting until her mother reached this point in her narrative. Beyond this, for everybody's good, her mother must not go. She must be prevented from reaching the terrible thing which was a mystery to Ann herself, and from which the girl instinctively shrank, as if it might touch her in her most vital part.

"Lemonade, mother dear?" nagged Ann tenderly.

"No, thank you, daughter," wavered Mrs. Cadwallader, in a gratified tone. It was perfectly evident that she was dying to be coaxed. "But, of course, if you wish it, dear, I will," she continued hurriedly, Ann having failed to pick up the cue. And she added an unpatriotic amount of sugar to the drink, took three large cookies, and some peppermints.

"Brian Cadwallader's death isn't what makes her seem so unnatural," decided Jane, observing her old friend narrowly. Jane had taken no refresh-

ment; she couldn't grapple with emotion and a tea plate at the same moment. "Something is on her mind, something that worries her more than she has ever been worried before."

At this exact instant, Mrs. Cadwallader's heavy eyes focused themselves on a distant object with such an expression of mingled dislike and apprehension that Jane Selfridge immediately followed her glance. And she started a little, as Ann gave a joyous exclamation.

"Irving!" she cried with a deep, tell-tale note of personal happiness in her voice.

Whereupon the three women, each with an utterly different expression, silently studied the young man as he came toward them over the lawn. Considering how difficult it is to walk for some distance toward people who are sitting still and staring at you, the young man bore himself with admirable self-possession. After speaking formally to Mrs. Cadwallader, and being presented to Jane, Irving Black turned directly to Ann.

"I've left my paints in the pergola," he said. "I thought, perhaps, if you'd come down, I'd try and finish your portrait."

"Who is he?" dryly inquired Jane Selfridge, the minute the man and girl were out of hearing.

"That portrait is a beautiful excuse!" announced Mrs. Cadwallader obliviously, in a choleric tone. "Jane, you've got to advise me what to do about Irving Black, before I get to a point where I can't judge. But first, I want to hear how he impressed you."

"I saw him only a minute, and I never was any judge of young men."

"All the same, I'm going to ask you something very unusual, Jane, and in strict confidence. Does it seem to you that to be as charming as Irving Black is not quite normal?"

"What do you mean?"

"Wasn't there something indefinable about him that made you uncomfortable?"

"No, Lizzie, there wasn't."

Disappointed, Mrs. Cadwallader shifted her ground.

"You don't have to be told how Brian worshiped Ann, and how he hated every man that dared come near her. Of course, Irving Black has been the most persistent of all. He stayed away, the first month after Brian went, but he's coming oftener now, and when I see the way Ann greets him, I don't know what to do."

"I don't see why you worry over that, Lizzie. It looks to me as if your only possible rôle was that of the audience."

"But I'm just as much opposed to Ann's marrying as Brian was. I'd do *anything*—to keep her. She's so young; I've had her such a little while!"

A deep red suffused Mrs. Cadwallader's carefully massaged pink cheeks.

"Any girl," she continued, "who is supposed to have millions is pursued, but Ann would be, anyway, because she's that kind. And Jane, there has been no one to whom I could tell the whole of that last morning with Brian."

Jane steeled herself for what was coming, because she had a sick, uncomfortable feeling that she was going to be used.

"After the nurse had told me that things were very bad," said Mrs. Cadwallader, nervously clasping and unclasping her hands as she talked, "she went to the telephone to call the doctor. When I saw Brian, I didn't believe he was so ill—he looked so calm and free from pain. He smiled at me in the way he always kept for me." Mrs. Cadwallader paused breathlessly, and when she continued, it was in another tone, a tone which set every one of Jane's steady nerves on edge. "Brian told me that an intimate friend of Irving Black's had taken the trouble to go to Brian's office, and tell him that

every one who knew him well considered Irving Black peculiar to the point of not being sane. This man—Brian didn't tell me his name—had come as the emissary of several people who thought that we should know. Brian then begged me to use every means in my power to keep Ann from marrying Irving Black. At that minute, the nurse came hurrying in and forbade Brian's talking any more. He sank into a stupor, from which he never roused."

There fell upon the two old friends a silence, broken only by the distant murmur of voices in the pergola by the sea.

"I want your advice, Jane." Mrs. Cadwallader leaned toward her friend half dominantly, half piteously, and her hands lay tired and defeated in her black *crêpe de Chine* lap.

"Please don't go by what I say, Lizzie. I know that your husband would never have misrepresented anything, no matter what was at stake, but as I never in my life saw any one who looked more normal than this young Mr. Black, I should say that your husband was too ill to know what he was talking about." Jane paused. "But it's the sort of thing you can't run any risk about, Lizzie," she yielded, somewhat against her better judgment.

"That's it! I must run no risk!" Mrs. Cadwallader picked her up almost triumphantly. "I tell you, I will not give up Ann. I have lost Brian, and I have a right to Ann. Without her, there would be no meaning to anything. Look at this place!" She leaned back in her rocking-chair with that curious pride in her possessions which invariably irritated Jane at the same time that it appealed to her as pathetic and almost babyish. "This house," continued Mrs. Cadwallader, in her more formal, public manner, "is called the most magnificent place on the Atlantic coast." Then she dropped back to the confidential. "Now that Brian has gone, the

only point there is left to it is Ann's not marrying. But I ought not to have to plan and scheme to keep her, when she's mine! You know how nearly I died, when she came. You know how disappointed we were because she was our only child. We were afraid to love one human being as much as we loved her." After a moment she added, "There's no one like you, Jane. It's such a relief to talk to you."

Jane astutely evaded these blandishments, because, of old, she knew that Lizzie never wasted her compliments. When she bothered with flattery, she wanted something of its recipient.

"You're in a tight place, Lizzie, but I feel obliged to say that I can't feel that you are telling me everything, even now."

Mrs. Cadwallader pretended to ignore this remark, and glanced down toward the pergola.

"They always disappear," she said. "It doesn't take any imagination to guess why. They're making love, Jane, and I've got to stop it now!"

"Why don't you talk to him?" inquired Jane, expecting to be snubbed.

"I am thinking of asking him to stay and dine. That will give me an opportunity to say, in a general way, that I don't intend to allow Ann to marry. I won't see the man alone, though, and I won't lower myself by extending the invitation, personally. You go down and find them, Jane, see what they are doing, and invite him."

Obediently Miss Selfridge rose, put down her knitting, shook out the folds of her five-year-old pin-dotted foulard, and started across the lawn. She could feel Lizzie Cadwallader's critical glances on her back, and she consequently walked self-consciously.

"What difference does it make, if I do know she's thinking uncomplimentary thoughts about me?" fumed Jane to herself. "She's the oldest friend I've got, and she can no more help be-

ing critical than she can help being rich. She has had everything she wanted all her life, and she thinks she can go on having everything if she manages right. She would have liked more children, if she could have had them without any physical inconvenience. And she's going to keep Ann, if she can—the spoiled old aristocrat!"

Suddenly conscience-stricken at her thoughts, Jane pulled herself together, and turned and waved at Mrs. Cadwallader. Although looking straight at her, Mrs. Cadwallader failed to return the salutation. She was far too sure of Jane to bother about waving to her. Jane would stand for anything!

"She's too lazy to move," concluded Miss Selfridge savagely, and for the thousandth snubbed time, she wondered why she kept up the intimacy. Mrs. Cadwallader talked only of herself and *her* problems; she writhed impatiently or yawned if Jane mentioned hers.

"I suppose I keep on with her because she's an unbreakable habit—like a vice," decided Miss Selfridge, "and because, after all, it is a comfort to know somebody that remembers people you loved that died forty years ago."

As Jane neared the pergola, her dignified walk changed to a conspicuous saunter. Delicately, she wished to give the lovers plenty of notice of her coming. But they weren't in the vine-hung arbor, and they weren't in the garden. As she passed round the high hedge behind the garden, she came suddenly upon them, silhouetted against the sea. Ann, slender and radiant in her black gown, was startlingly distinct in her proximity to the young man's white summer suit. Just as Jane appeared, their lips met. As was utterly fitting, under the circumstances, they lost all sense of things mundane.

"But if we both know that your mother will never consent, what's the sense in waiting?"

Jane wondered if all men looked so

enchantingly boyish when they made love.

"I'm here," she called naïvely. "I'm so sorry!" As they turned upon her, flaming with surprise, she added with disarming candor, "And I'm glad I'm here, too. I've never known much about lovers and being in love."

Forgetting her errand, she sat down before them on a garden bench and surveyed them with such kindling, wistful eyes that after a minute, they decided not to be annoyed. Ann sat down on one side of her, and Irving Black on the other, and somehow one of them took either of her hands.

For the moment, Jane forgot that there was a question of the young man's sanity. How could she remember it, when she sat there between them like a communicating wire, charged with all their electricity? Unless Mrs. Cadwallader yielded at once, they wouldn't wait. Minutes, with them, were weeks. They might steal away that night. She could feel it all in the air.

"I've come to tell you that Mrs. Cadwallader wants you to stay and dine," said Jane. Away from her dominating Lizzie, she felt brisk, alert, and capable.

"This sounds auspicious, Ann!"

"It sounds ominous," said the girl. "Mother is going to be horrid. Aunt Jane, mother knows exactly how I feel about Irving. She knew all last year, when I was pretending that I didn't care, because the thought of my marrying always made father worse. But mother is strong, or she would be, if she didn't keep dwelling on that last morning. I'm willing to put off the wedding out of respect to father, if mother will accept our engagement. If not, we have decided not to wait. Why, the wedding ceremony itself justifies a girl in forsaking all others—and——"

"Mr. Black," interrupted Jane, "I want to see you alone. Ann, go down into the summerhouse and stuff your fingers in your ears and don't listen."

Ann looked at Miss Selfridge skeptically, but she obeyed.

"Mr. Black," asked Jane, "is there any reason you know why you shouldn't marry Ann?"

"It's a rather—amazing question, Miss Selfridge."

As his unswerving eyes met hers, it seemed as if she needed no alienist to tell her that here was the happiest, most serene sanity.

"I realized it was amazing when I had it to ask. But you see, I'm trying to help you."

He scrutinized her, in turn; her unfathomably honest eyes, her wise, half-grim mouth.

"There are at least two perfectly good reasons why I shouldn't marry Ann," he said easily. "The first is the very old reason: I'm not anywhere near good enough. The second reason is more involved. I suppose no self-respecting man likes to marry a girl—with all this." He turned and looked thoughtfully at the most magnificent place on the Atlantic coast. "I'm young, Miss Selfridge, and I don't hate money as much as I ought to, but I don't want to be the appendage of a great estate. One of the things that has made me love Ann is the fact that she doesn't let money make any difference. She's sick and tired of show and ostentation. Why, do you know what Ann wants more than anything?"

"No, but I'd like to."

"She wants a little white kitchen of her own and absolutely no maid at all. She wants to make a chocolate cake."

"Yes?" Jane felt half ashamed of the immense throb of sympathy which swept through her.

"Ann is tired of having a lot of people get between her and herself—if you understand. There are thirty servants in that house up there. Thirty—to wait on two! Of course, I don't know Mrs. Cadwallader at all, but it always seems to me that she looks at life from the

standpoint of a rich woman, first, last, and always. She sees everything from a sort of opera box. She doesn't want Ann to marry me—but then, she doesn't want Ann to marry *any one*."

"Well," said Jane, "you stay to dinner, Mr. Black. Meanwhile, I'll go back and talk to Mrs. Cadwallader. And you can count on my interest in Ann's chocolate cake!"

As Jane neared her hostess, she began to feel that siding with each of the opposing parties would not be an easy course. Her luxury-loving friend waited for her with unruffled complacency.

"Of course, he is going to stay!" observed Mrs. Cadwallader. People always stayed, when *she* asked them. They had to!

"Oh, yes," answered Jane loftily, as she took up her knitting.

"You look as if you'd come into money, Jane. What have you to say?"

The two women eyed each other warily, and there came into the air a certain spicy expectancy.

"I suppose," began Jane, in a self-possessed tone, which she was afraid she couldn't keep up, "that *you* feel sorry for people who have no money, Lizzie. Personally, I feel sorry for any one who misrepresents things for selfish ends, because, in the long run, that sort of thing doesn't work."

"Who has been doing it?" Mrs. Cadwallader artfully inquired.

"I'm not *sure* anybody has."

"Then, why are you talking about it?"

"Some people, Lizzie, who haven't had the large opportunities of your great wealth, might be unwise enough to misrepresent things so that they could have their own way; and, of course, every one knows that the person who always has his own way deteriorates and becomes his own worst enemy. I suppose a person deteriorates every time he does a selfish thing."



Mrs. Cadwallader continued to stare at Miss Selfridge with adamant superiority.

"This is so much like a sermon, Jane, I expected to hear you give out the last hymn."

"About Irving Black," manipulated Jane skillfully. "It had doubtless occurred to you that Ann might run away with him before you get round to investigate his sanity."

Far from losing her self-possession, Jane found that it was growing miraculously. She felt almost dizzily at her ease.

"Ann is not the sort of girl who elopes," said Mrs. Cadwallader with the first hint of acid in her tone.

"Any sort of girl would elope with Irving Black. I advise you to find out about him to-night. Ask him to send his closest friend down to see you. He will do it, because he will do anything where Ann is concerned. But he will tell Ann afterward what you wanted of his friend."

After a trenchant silence, Mrs. Cadwallader hitched forward in her chair and rose ponderously, on account of not having moved for two long hours.

"You must be careful, Jane, that you don't grow garrulous. Continuous talking induces headaches on the part of the auditors. I'm going to dress for dinner. Amuse yourself until I come back. You know where everything is."

She left the veranda superbly and retired to let her French maid swathe her in the most expensive and lugubrious of all her mourning dinner gowns.

Though Ann, Irving Black, and Jane Selfridge were nervous and furtive at dinner, Mrs. Brian Cadwallader was portentously gracious. She talked brilliantly of art in the abstract, about which she received instruction twice a week, and she informed Irving Black, who knew all about it, that the cubists had come into their own in the new art of camouflage. Irving Black re-

lated concrete stories of this and that artist, who, like himself, had, during the war, given his services to the government. Whenever he was just at the climax of a story, and his eyes were shining, Mrs. Cadwallader murmured something to the butler, who obediently passed whatever was being served to the young man, thus successfully interrupting him.

After dinner, Mrs. Cadwallader threw on a costly coat, and walked down to the pergola, alone. When, at half past ten, she hadn't come back, Jane, in spite of her forebodings, decided to give it up and go to bed. She didn't want to intrude on the lovers, as they whispered intermittently in the garden; she didn't dare interfere with Lizzie's grand-stand play of splendid isolation. It was reassuring to remember how well Lizzie loved comfort. Even in her misery, she would look out that she didn't catch cold.

Her preparations for the night being a lengthy ceremonial, it was some time later when Jane crept between the scented linen sheets. As she humbly and drowsily regaled herself in lavender, somebody switched on her lights from without, and threw open her door. Instinctively Jane drew the bed clothes up around her neck so that the sight of her machine-made cotton nightgown needn't offend Mrs. Cadwallader. But Mrs. Cadwallader, enveloped in the forbidding mystery which occasionally makes people strangers even to those who know them best, seated herself in a remote corner of the great guest room, as if she couldn't bear to be near anybody. Like a flash it came to Jane that Lizzie had *not* been so safe and smug as she fancied, down there by the sea alone.

"It is over," said Mrs. Cadwallader. "They are engaged."

"Lizzie!"

"After long thought, I came to agree with you, Jane. I have brought myself

to believe that Brian was wandering when he said it. I hope you're *satisfied!*"

Overcome with the mighty relief, which surged over her, Jane swallowed chokily, and hoped Lizzie didn't notice how she trembled beneath the monogrammed blanket. She couldn't accept calmly the tremendous fact that Lizzie had conquered herself.

"The wedding won't take place for several months. They granted me that. And one last thing, Jane. Don't ever refer to what I told you this afternoon. The subject is too painful."

For the first time in Mrs. Cadwallader's arrogant life, her clothes were more splendid than her way of wearing them. Their very pretentiousness emphasized her defeat.

"Some day," thought Jane, as she blinked and trembled before her, "some day she'll get round to tell me, in an offhand way, that Brian never told her that young Black was insane. And *some* day, a long time after that, she will give way completely, and blame herself terribly for what she almost did."

Mrs. Cadwallader rose with a sudden fretful intolerance, and rustled out of Jane's door without another word. Jane leaped from her bed.

"Lizzie!" she called after her friend. "What are you going to do?"

Mrs. Cadwallader didn't answer, but Jane sighed with relief when she saw her friend turn safely into her own room. In a sudden flash of revelation, she knew that it would be perfectly possible for Lizzie to go out of the house and down into the sea.

"Why did I ever meddle?" Jane asked herself piteously.

And then, from her place in the shadows of the dimly lit upper hall, she saw the lovers come out of the drawing-room, into the brilliant hall below. They were hand in hand, and were looking at each other gently, as true lovers should, a little in awe, now that they had been given full right to their joy.

"The sight of those two is the spoils of my victory!" decided Jane. "But I shall feel in duty bound to stay here until Lizzie feels up to bullying me again."



### SAVOIR FAIRE

THE Ellyson-Smythes were the subject of much discussion. They were entertaining a distinguished guest. But with a certain air of mystery. They never spoke of him, and did not introduce him to their friends.

He was seen driving with them in their motor—in the box at the opera—playing golf with Mr. Ellyson-Smythe at the country club—escorting Mrs. Ellyson-Smythe to the art galleries.

Naturally, he became the object of much curiosity. Who was he? A count incognito? A famous author? A political refugee? The eldest daughter's husband?

But no one seemed to know.

Finally the secret leaked out. And then the Ellyson-Smythes were admired for their cleverness and their strategy, and other families began to emulate their example.

For it was discovered that this unknown man was their chef.

CARL GLICK.

# The Lie on His Lips

By Edwina LeVin

Author of "Happiness à la Mode," "False Colors," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MARSHALL FRANTZ

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** This is Harry Hamilton's story exactly as it was given to me. I make no claims for it. It was flashed into my mind, and I believed it to be a fictional tale. Several rather startling occurrences during the writing of it have left me wondering.

**S**TROLLING casually along a shaded street of the Southern city in which I had practiced law for some years, I was attracted by a dense crowd in the public square. Not being a curious man I was minded to pass on, when an unusual something in the faces of the crowd—a drawn tensivity and whiteness—made me hesitate. An ugly structure, far back on the green and a little beyond the courthouse, told the story of one who had sinned against the social conscience of a State still holding to the barbarous custom of hanging. I was surprised, as I had no recollection of this case.

"Who is it?" I asked a client of mine, on the outer edge of the crowd.

He neither looked at me, nor spoke, but kept straining his neck to see above those in front of him.

"Who is it?" I asked of another man.

But he, too, was intent on the thing that was happening.

Again I started to turn away and was arrested a second time by the sound of a woman sobbing. Impelled now by that morbid curiosity which is innate in all of us, backed by the strange looks of the pushing, straining crowd, and that heaviness of spirit which lay upon me, I made my way quickly through the crowd to where a group of men were bending over the form of a man stretched on the ground.

As I looked, the poor devil was lifted into a rough wooden box. As his head

rolled to one side, I saw beneath the black cloth which covered his face. There was something strangely familiar about his features. I had seen him before, but could not recollect where.

"God!" cried out a man on my right.

He put his hands over his face.

Greatly puzzled, I repeated my question as a sort of general interrogation, glancing at several of the bystanders. None of them took the slightest notice, and it occurred to me that there was something more than horror in the faces of those about me. Uncertainty and fear were upon them.

"I can't believe he done it," whispered Higgins, the garage man with whom I kept my car.

"Wouldn't be the first man hung for a crime he never committed!" put in a young man.

"Being a lawyer, you would have thought he might have been a little less crude about it," remarked another.

"Poor Mr. Hamilton!" sobbed a man, whose bent shoulders heaved convulsively. "He was always mighty good to me, but I will say I don't believe he loved Miss Florence."

The speaker was Mike, my old gardener.

A thrill of horror shot through me. I bent over, peering at the man in the black box. They were nailing the top down, yet I saw the face quite clearly through the lid.

All at once I knew him.

I was looking at my own face!

In a rush of memory it all came back to me. I had been hanged for the murder of my wife!

Standing in the center of that whispering, awe-stricken crowd, the whole case flashed through my mind in a twinkling. The arrest; the stir in a town where I had been prominent; the days in a noisome jail; the suspense; the chain of evidence, gradually forged in that diabolically mysterious way of the law; the sentence by my friend, Judge Goldman.

Looking into the faces of my fellow townsmen a feeling of grim satisfaction fell upon me. They had hanged me, but they were not happy about it. Humanity is always satisfied to see justice done, but it wants to be sure, very sure, that it is justice and not some strange miscarriage of it.

Curiously, I could look behind their faces into their minds. I knew that while each one believed I must have committed the crime for which I had just paid the penalty, still they were all thinking one thought—*there might have been a mistake!*

For, older than reason, deeply rooted in the emotional nature of man, is a belief in man. It is an essential part of that supreme ego which has made him struggle through endless generations for supremacy over the beasts and which sends him to the grave, hoping for continued individuality. Thus, however perfect the evidence, there is always a feeling of intense relief in the court, when a man condemned to die, confesses.

I had gone to the gallows protesting my innocence, knowing that the very nature of men, through their own strivings after good, would cover my ignominy with softening veils.

"Somehow I never can quite believe that a man will deliberately go into eternity with a lie on his lips," said a man I knew well.

The hideous box in which my body lay was lifted and the crowd parted to make way for its passage.

A few faithful friends followed to the grave. So did I.

I had loved that body and felt a certain pride in acknowledging that it was fine and manly to look upon.

Looking down, I was surprised to find that I had a very definite body. It was identical with the one in the grave. I puzzled over this for a moment, then threw back my head and laughed loudly. This man in the grave was not myself, but some other who looked astonishingly like me. My next thought sobered me. I must get away from here before they caught me and flung me back into jail. Instantly, I was out of the graveyard and far down the street.

Entering one of the well-known cafés, I waited with some impatience for service. Presently, after hailing a number of waiters who passed me by, without so much as a glance, indignantly I sought the manager. He looked at me with a frown on his face that cleared even as he looked.

"You know, I had an odd feeling, as if Hamilton had passed me," he remarked to his cashier. "Just a vague impression, like when you see somebody without looking at him. Guess my nerves are rather upset!"

"You did see me, Graves," I replied. "As a matter of fact, I'm hungry, and these waiters of yours appear to be having a holiday."

He turned away. It gave me a shock. Clearly, he didn't care for my patronage.

With a feeling of bitterness, I left this place where I had spent many dollars. Meanwhile my hunger was increasing.

In the next café I met with the same sort of treatment and left in a dudgeon. I went from one to another. Realizing at last that I was under a general

boycott, I wondered why. My mind would not function. I tried to recollect, something which had been in my thought only a little while ago—something important; but I could not.

Tired, harassed, and famished, I finally turned toward the park. There, at least, was a fountain, free to all.

I met a number of old friends on the way. They all looked past me. Now and again I would stop for a word with some clients, but always they brushed me aside, most of them stepping aside when I confronted them. One man, a coarse, sensual chap, walked right through me!

I got myself together with a feeling of indignation and rage, and turned to strike at him; but in so doing I found that I had jumped eight blocks beyond him by the sheer force of my effort! This rather interested me, and by way of experiment I decided to see if I could project myself forward by a series of jumps. I had been walking all day and was extremely tired. A slight movement sent me some eight blocks up the street! The idea amused me and I kept jumping.

On reaching the fountain I bent down to drink, and to my amazement found that I could not. There seemed to be a sort of veil over my face, a thick mask, as it were, which, however, did not interfere with sight or breathing. I tried to lift it, and found that while I could move my arms forward and backward, I could not bring them to my face. I looked down

at my feet and saw they were manacled with heavy chains, separated by the length of my step. Staring into a pool beside the fountain, I saw that my face was covered by a network of chains, which were somehow connected with the great chain that bound my arms and reached down around my legs and ankles.

"God help me!" I groaned involuntarily. I could not recollect that I had ever prayed before, believing as I did that man, like the rose, finished his little day and fertilized the earth; that force ruled, and that God was a myth. As if by magic there appeared beside me a form that was somewhat familiar. Even as I looked I recognized her.

"Why, Florence!" I exclaimed, "I thought you were——"

"Dead?" She



His wife pointed to the open window.

laughed gently. "That was just one of your mistakes."

It was astonishing! I had a distinct recollection of her burial! But I did not feel inclined to doubt her. She had always been a truthful woman.

"Poor Harry!" said the gentle voice of my wife.

"Florence, tell me what this means!"

"You are earthbound," she replied.

Suddenly I recollected that important thing which had slipped my memory after I left the graveyard—my trial! And the hanging of that man so strangely like me! *My crime!*

She read my thought.

"No, you have paid for that with your own earth life, which you so loved!"

"Then by whose order am I in chains?"

"Your own. You came here with a great lie on your lips." She spoke sadly. "Because of it, the jurors who found you guilty will dream unhappily and wonder if they could have made a mistake; and the judge who fixed your sentence will add a few more gray hairs because, deep in his subconscious mind, underneath the higher reasoning mind, will be a nagging question. And the poor old hangman who pulled the trap will lie awake of nights because you told him he was hanging an innocent man!"

"But they were so damnably sure!" I retorted bitterly.

"Man is never sure of anything," she answered with a thoughtfulness I had not expected of her. "Centuries on centuries he has been groping after the infinite, trying to be sure of some one thing. He has developed a little instrument which he calls reason, and by that he tries to measure a universe."

"Where did you get all that, Florence?" I asked.

"I don't know; it just comes to one on this plane. It seems to be part of the great thought traveling about. One

meets strangers along the highway and they stop to talk about man's limitations. We are all struggling so hard to help our loved ones to an understanding of truth."

"Who are 'we,' Florence?"

"We are those who, having shed our material coats and come into a higher life, are still earth workers."

"You speak abstractedly," I said. "My mind is in a sort of whirl! I don't clearly comprehend all you're saying. Tell me about these bonds on me. How long am I doomed to wear them?"

"Until you break the chain of lies with which you have covered yourself."

"How am I to break it?"

"By speaking the truth."

"What is the truth?"

"You know it."

"Yes, I know it. *I murdered my wife!*"

"That's it."

I threw back my head and laughed.

"Ha! So that's what they want! Well, tell them I'll go to hell first!"

Instantly Florence faded from my sight and I was left staring at the space where she had stood.

Strange things were happening; but as yet, the fullness of my relation to life had not come to me.

A fearful homesickness assailed me. I rose up to go—and suddenly found myself back in the graveyard, *descending into the earth*. With a scream of terror I tried to tear myself out, but was swallowed quickly.

"Dear God, where am I?" I cried.

My vision cleared and I saw Florence standing over, and some feet above me.

"You are at home, Harry," she said.

"You are lying to me! This is not our home!"

"Not our home, Harry, but your home. It is the house in which you lived for forty years."

"I felt myself sink down into the earth!" I cried. "I am underground!"



"You are in the grave," she replied.

"Buried alive!" I sobbed.

"No, not buried alive; merely resting in the body you cast off."

For a space my mind stood still, torn by a thousand agonies of doubt and fear most terrible. A hideous suspicion had come to me.

"Florence!" I pleaded, "don't leave! Tell me—is this death?"

"To the senses of man, you are dead," she replied in that curiously detached way she had. "They laid your body here. You came with them and saw them lower it."

"I know; but somehow I did not connect it definitely with myself," I said. "I thought at first it was I; then it seemed as if it were not."

"It's always so," she answered. "The step between the two worlds is so short, the bond so close, that it is difficult, on first coming over, to realize the change. Usually, we learn through the grief of our loved ones."

"Then death is not the end!"

"There is no death! 'Dust thou art, to dust returneth, was not spoken of the soul.'"

"But surely I am not to stay here!"

"Oh, no, you will merely rest here, of nights, till you can lift yourself out."

"Lift myself!" My agony was so great that it seemed as if it must explode my coffin and tear the earth from over me. "Tell me how."

"Relieve the minds of the men you left bound by doubt. In binding them you bound yourself."

"And will they remove these chains?"

"The chains will fall away."

"Then what new torture will they find for me?"

"They have no power over you. You are, as you have always been, free to make your life."

"How can you say I'm free," I groaned, "with these bonds!"

"You made them, and can unmake them. The truth will set you free."

"Florence," I pleaded, "help me out of here! I'll go to Judge Goldman at once and tell him the truth. I can't endure this thing that is put upon me. Better ignominy than the leprous feel of the earth, the binding tortures."

"I can't help you. No one can. I have been appointed to direct you. You are alone with your past and with me as your friend."

She was gone. Mercifully I slept.

In the morning I came up, shuddering, to earth. A damp uncleanness clung to me and I hurried to the big fountain and jumped into the pool with all my clothes on. I was surprised to find, upon coming out, that I was quite dry. It is true that only by constant reminders do we adjust to the change. Again I was assailed by hunger and my thoughts turned with intense desire to my big, maple-shaded house out on Grove Street.

Without making a single move and almost before my thought was finished, I found myself on my own steps. I felt for my key, but even as I did so I was walking through the oaken door. I turned around, too astonished for words. I had again forgotten the happenings of yesterday; so, after struggling with the miracle for a second, I dismissed it from my mind and went upstairs to get ready for dinner.

The place was strangely quiet and there was an odor as of bottled air, as of a house that has been closed for some time. It nauseated me and I hastened to open a window. As I did so, I saw a neighbor, Mrs. Newcomb, who was in her back yard adjoining ours, look up with a startled face. I smiled and bowed to her, but instead of her usual cheery recognition I heard her cry:

"Leonard! Leonard! Come here!"

Hurt by her manner, I drew back behind the curtain and presently saw Mr. Newcomb come out. His wife pointed to the open window, with terri-

fied eyes. Newcomb seemed surprised; and then I heard him say:

"Probably wasn't locked."

"But it opened just as if by some person," replied Mrs. Newcomb.

"Don't be foolish, dear," Newcomb smiled. "Come on into the house. This business of Hamilton's is getting on your nerves. I admit it's got me. The last man on earth I'd have thought of as doing such a thing!"

Wondering at his words, I went down to

Condemned to slow starvation of body, mind, and heart!

They had not succeeded in taking my life. Instead, they had called in the devil himself to conjure tortures such as no human mind could have conceived. I was absolutely free to go and come at will, to rest in my own house, to walk about the streets or whatever it pleased me to do; but I could not take one thing from life, not even a glass of water! Hungry and thirsty, I was to see food and drink and not be able to



"Judge," I said, "may I see you privately for a few minutes?" He paid no attention to me, but went on talking.

the dining room and sat in my accustomed place. The house was dark, the big dining room full of shadows and quiet. The table was covered with dust, and there were no signs of a dinner nor of anybody about. A box half full of dried figs was on a side table. I reached for one, lifted it to my mouth, then let it fall.

I could not pass it through the mesh of chains that covered my face. In a rush of horror the recollection of my situation overwhelmed me! My body fell in hopeless agony across the table.

touch them; to mingle with men and to be ignored by them. They could walk on me and through me without fear of retaliation. Whatever they chose to put upon me I must accept. Again I called out to God. Why does man's extremity bring that name to his lips?

I felt Florence beside me.

"Go to Judge Goldman's house," she said. "The truth shall make you free!"

Instantly my spirits soared. If that were all, how easy it would be!

Just ahead of us I recognized the

back of Temple, the district attorney who had prosecuted me.

"Go tell him," urged Florence.

"I won't," I replied. "I'll tell Judge Goldman! Nothing would please Temple better than to be able to put me on the grill again."

"You forget that he can't!"

"So I did," I mused, thinking she referred to the law which says that a man cannot be tried a second time for the same crime, once he has been set free. I couldn't keep my relation to earth clear.

Florence left me at Judge Goldman's house. He was giving a party. This was no time to bother him. But the power of my desire was too great! Curiously, I did not doubt what Florence had told me. I knew that the moment I got the truth to him my bonds would fall away. I went hesitatingly up the steps.

Hesitating, I waited for Johnson to ask my business. He did not, and I touched him on the arm.

"Johnson," I said, "tell the judge I have something very urgent to lay before him, or I would not have come this morning."

Johnson turned with a curious start, then looked away. A pang shot through me. Finding that I could not get his attention, I passed in, unannounced, and mingled with the guests. Again and again I heard my name mentioned. They whispered together in little groups, about me. I was astonished that they thought I could not hear them. Most of them were convinced by the evidence that I was guilty, but in their minds I saw doubt.

In the dining room I met the judge.

"Judge," I said, "may I see you privately for a few minutes?"

He paid no attention to me, but went on talking. A dull agony covered me.

"But the evidence was largely circumstantial," some one was saying.

And just here, I made a shocking

discovery. *They could not see me!* The thing seemed impossible. I was in every way just as much present as I had ever been; my body was as tangible, as real.

"In very rare cases are men convicted of cold-blooded murder on more positive evidence," the judge was saying. "It's only when a man kills in passion, in the presence of a witness that we can have absolute proof."

"Do you ever feel any sense of worry, any deep-laid fear that your judgment may have been misdirected?" asked the first speaker.

"Knowing myself to be merely a man, this must be so. It is this self-acknowledgment of his limitations that puts gray hairs in a judge's head."

He spoke laughingly but the undercurrent of seriousness was there.

"Surely you don't allow yourself to brood over your cases?"

"Of course not! I am the master of my conscious mind, but we each and every one are mastered by our subconscious minds, which go on thinking while reason sleeps and will not be put down by the inert will. I dreamed of Hamilton last night and several nights since he was hanged. I liked him!"

I realized then that it had all occurred not that day nor the day before. I knew now that time was nothing!

Well, they must at least *hear me*.

I tried to break in on the conversation, but they moved on, separating and mingling with the other guests. All evening I followed the judge about. Constantly I cried out the truth which would set me free.

Finally his guests left and he retired to sleep. So did his household. This surprised me, as it was broad daylight. As there seemed no occasion for remaining longer, I went out into the street. It was full of radiant persons, but only now and then did we pass a solid form. Florence was with me.

"The judge simply wouldn't listen," I said miserably. "He couldn't hear me."

"It is difficult to speak to a man incased in materialism," she replied.

I sank down on the sidewalk and began to sob.

"Suppose I should never make anybody hear!"

"Can you conceive of such horror throughout eternity?" she asked.

"No, no, no, *no!*" I screamed, jumping up, terrified at the thought. "They *must* hear! They *shall* hear! I'll cry it aloud through the streets! The devils have done this thing to me!"

"Devils are the creations of lost opportunities," sighed Florence. "I have much, too, to overcome. That's why I am set to show you the way and comfort you. You are my work!"

"You never did any wrong," I said.

"Nor any good," she replied. "I took from life and gave nothing back to it. I never even gave a child!"

This surprised me. Florence hadn't been a bad sort, just an inefficient. I don't know when the idea of getting rid of her first came to me. Perhaps it had been in the back of my mind ever since the first day on which Millie Darrind came into my office with her hurt blue eyes and lips like a scarlet poppy bud. As one of the trustees of her father's will I had had occasion to see her often.

I had not really wanted to kill Florence. In fact, I should have preferred to have her live. I liked her in a way, and, being of a naturally kind nature, I hated to hurt even an ant in my path. I would always step over it, if possible. But on the other hand, my ambition, my standing among men, these had always been my religion. My fellow men were so many contributory elements to be cultivated, or just dead limbs that must be chipped off, to insure my growth.

I sank back to the sidewalk and wept.

When, at dusk, everybody in town began to get up and go about the routine of life, opening stores and offices as they had once done in the daytime, I went back to my loathsome bed, though I had tried hard to stay away. I slept horribly. Upon rising I went again to Judge Goldman's house. I now had but one purpose, one thought.

The family was at breakfast, and I sat down uninvited. That curious ego which makes man desire attention was on me, and I felt hurt that no one looked at me or spoke, though I knew now the reason.

When the judge went to his study, I ran after him crying:

*"I murdered my wife! I murdered my wife!"*

I pleaded with him to hear me; but beyond a frown of annoyance now and again, he showed not the slightest knowledge of my presence.

After a while I gave up in despair and went to the foreman of the jury that had convicted me. He was seated at a table in a big living room, smoking gloomily. The smoke held me away and I was forced out into the streets again.

I found the hangman who had sprung the trap that separated me from material life. He was asleep. I bent over him and blew in his face. His eyes flew open. Into them came a look of unutterable horror. He sprang up with a scream. Terrified, I fled through the wall of the house.

Afraid to go back, I wandered about, visiting the various homes of the jurymen and the lawyers who had defended me; even going to Temple, the district attorney who had prosecuted me with such bitterness. Some of them saw me in their dreams; others were awakened and with a vague uneasiness turned over and went to sleep. Some I could not touch at all.

The days that followed, or I should say the nights, were gruelling repeti-

tions of each other. I was a wanderer on the face of the earth, bound hand and foot by my own past acts; flayed by the devils of my own creation.

I cried out continually:

"I murdered my wife! I murdered my wife!"

Surely, some day I must meet some one who could hear my voice!

Florence had told me, by way of encouragement, that there were men so highly keyed, so closely in touch with our plane of life, that they could hear me, if only I could find them. And so, for fear of passing such a one I cried out my truth to all. Now and again, some one would turn a startled face toward me, and hurry on.

My business partner saw me one day—I should say night—having gone back to the office for a brief he had intended to go over, but he was so terrified that I was unable to speak to him.

"Oh, God, help me!" I cried. "Help me to recover my lost opportunities; to deliver this truth which shall make me free!"

As always when I cried unto God, Florence came to me.

"Why not go to California," she said, "and try one of the societies where they go into the silence for communication with the higher beings?"

"Take me," I begged.

In what was but the space of a thought, I found myself in a room with one window, over which was hung a black blanket. It was big, square, and with a high ceiling. In chairs against the wall, on all four sides, sat men and women. In the center of this group was a woman. By her side was a basin of water, and three horns like speaking trumpets were beside the basin. The room was perfectly light to me, but I saw that to their senses it was in complete darkness. There were radiant forms about the woman and overhead.

At the moment of my entrance they

were singing: "Nearer, my God, to Thee." I held myself in rigid waiting, and the moment the psalm ceased, I cried out:

"I murdered my wife!"

But my words fell back on me, and I knew they had not heard. Other voices spoke, and the persons ranged about the wall answered them, evidently hearing distinctly. Again I tried to bring my voice through. But they went on conversing with the radiant forms, paying no attention to me. I took hold of the woman in the center of the circle and she cried out in pain.

"Oh! such a pain at the base of my brain!" she cried. "I'm hungry and thirsty, and I can't lift my hands! Oh, my hands! Oh, my head!" She bent over, moaning and crying. "There's a spirit here who is in terrible agony!" cried the medium. "Oh, won't somebody speak to it? Is there anybody in this room to whom this spirit may belong? If so, speak! I feel as if I'm dying!"

There were murmurs of: "Why doesn't somebody speak?"

"Dear spirit," said a woman in one corner of the room, "won't you—can't you speak to us?"

I tried to answer, but my voice was bound as in a nightmare.

The medium continued to moan.

"My tongue!" she said. "It's growing thick! My eyes are burning and my head feels as if it's being unfastened from my spine!"

Some one started a song. The circle joined; but above all were heard the cries of the suffering medium, who was experiencing in her body the tortures that were mine. All the radiant forms disappeared. I was alone in the circle, holding hard to that medium, determined to get my voice through and deliver the truth which would set me free.

The psalm died. I heard my own voice saying:

"I murdered my wife! I murdered my wife!"

A gasp went around the circle and I knew that I had got it through. I continued to cry out. There was a general movement and a murmur of:

*"An evil spirit!"*

The medium stood up.

"The light! the light!" she cried thickly.

I heard the terror in the voices about me. They were all talking at once, and the medium, whom I had lost, was saying:

"An evil spirit got in. It almost killed me!"

For a few minutes they talked together, and then in chorus they cried:

"Begone, thou wicked wanderer!"

They banished me from the room.

After that, I went from circle to circle, always seeking those groups where people were gathered together for the purpose of learning the eternal truths of life. But wherever I got their attention, they cast me out as an evil spirit.

One evening I broke into a room where there were young people gathered together, and a girl was operating one of those toys called a Ouija board. I seized on it and wrote out my hideous message. They thought it a great joke. Somebody suggested that she had been a man in a previous incarnation, and having murdered her wife, had been condemned to come back to earth in the form of a woman.

The young men agreed that this was punishment enough for her crime. Finding that they were determined not to take me seriously, I left them, despair and disgust in my heart.

In order that you may know how hideous was my punishment, I want to say that not only does spiritual man embody all the senses of the physical man, but they are intensified—sight, sound, hearing, smell, taste, everything!

All too well I knew that my only

hope lay in unsaying the lie and setting at rest the minds of those men whose thoughts helped to bind me with fear.

Still I seized on every sensitive mind with which I came into contact.

Men dreamed of me who had never seen or heard of me. Old women and children saw me. I was constantly in the minds of my friends, and as time passed, they grew to think more kindly of me and to look with more doubt on the evidence that had separated me from material life. This but added to my problem, because the less they believed the truth, the more I became bound by the lies. I recollected the impish joy with which I had counted upon this very attitude!

I was ready to give up and was beginning to spend most of my time, if not actually in my body, at least beside my grave. Wandering about the gravestones, looking down at the folk who lay there, I found only one other man among hundreds of graves, who was condemned as I was, when not at work, to occupy his body.

He had quietly walked into a factory where five thousand men and women were working, had left a suitcase containing a bomb in which was a time fuse, which had sent practically all of them into eternity. He was bound to earth and to his body for a space of time that would total the balance of all the years of earth life allotted to his victims. He figured that he had only one hundred and twenty-five thousand years to serve.

When not lying in his hideous bed he was busy rescuing his own mental children from the flames, enduring all the combined torture of smoke and flame that his victims had suffered.

"But your body won't last that long, which is fortunate!" I said to him.

"Oh, yes," he answered. "It will be preserved by and in my thought even after it has fallen into dust. I shall



lie here of nights, or rather I should say, of days, feeling, smelling, seeing all this hideousness, until my mind shall be set free *through service*."

"What a fate!" I cried.

"A just balance," he said. "And there is a sort of bonus system whereby the years are deducted. Sometimes I am privileged to snatch a child from the wheels of an automobile; sometimes I get the ear of a man who contemplates a great wrong to one or more of his fellows, and I put all the force of my great depression on his conscience, and succeed in turning him aside from the thing he would do; and each absolute act of unselfishness credits me with a hundred years!"

"Then, why don't you devote all your time to such unselfish work?"

"Now you have stumbled on to one of the great problems of human experience. If I seek to work out *my own* salvation by unselfishness, it immediately becomes selfishness; and its labor is lost! By unselfishness we are saved. For selfishness we must pay. It is a riddle that no man can disentangle. The best he can do is humbly to accept the opportunities that come to him.

"Were I to go out searching for the express purpose of gain, and shirking the duties which are justly mine, it would set me back rather than forward. So I go along day by day, serving my sentence and helping wherever I am privileged, without thought of the gain which comes automatically."

I turned shudderingly away, in the knowledge that if I failed to do my work, there was no hope of escape through my body falling into dust. *My mind would keep it there until I were free to leave it.*

I was walking desolately along when a woman of my acquaintance, whom I had not seen for some time, stopped me.

"Mr. Hamilton," she said, "I wish

you'd go over and see Joe. He is in a terrible state, and I can't do anything with him!"

"What's the matter, Mrs. Trumbull?"

"Well, you see, I have been addicted to the morphine habit for the past three years," she replied. "Joe didn't know anything about it. He discovered it to-day, and acts as if he were losing his mind over it."

"I'll be glad to do what I can," I said, having always found her a nice little thing and her husband a big, bluff, good-hearted fellow.

"Then, come," she said. Immediately we were both standing beside Joe Trumbull, who sat with his head on a table in the center of the room, his arms flung across it in an abandonment of despair.

I looked around the rather poorly furnished bedroom and was surprised to see a woman lying on the bed.

"Who is that?" I asked.

"Don't you know?" inquired Mrs. Trumbull.

Then I recognized her.

"I accidentally took an overdose."

I laid my hand on Joe's shoulder and he lifted his head. I noticed that his mind was an absolute blank. Then the selfish urge in me pushed out all thought of the thing I had come to do for him and his wife. I thought only of myself. Here was a receptive mind! I bent down and whispered to him:

"Trumbull, this is Hamilton. Go tell Judge Goldman that *I murdered my wife*."

The stricken man looked at me dazedly; and muttered after me:

"*I murdered my wife!*"

"That's right!" I cried joyously.

"Go tell Judge Goldman."

He rose stiffly and looked about the room with the uncertain air of a man who has forgotten what he wanted to do.

"Go tell Judge Goldman," I repeated, "that I murdered my wife."

Mechanically he reached for his hat, and seeing him hesitate again I took hold of his hand and we went out together.

After what seemed an endless journey, we walked up the judge's steps. I entered as had been my custom, without regard for closed doors; turning, I saw that Joe still stood on the outside. Forgetting for the moment, I kept urging him to come in. Then it dawned on me that he could not enter as I had. I went back outside and told him to press the bell. I had to repeat my request several times.

Judge Goldman himself answered. He was just preparing to go out.

"Tell him," I said, when the judge looked wonderingly at Trumbull, "*I murdered my wife!*"

"*I murdered my wife!*" he repeated.

The judge looked startled. Then after some hesitation asked Trumbull to come in and tell him about it.

"Sit down, Trumbull," said Judge Goldman. "Now tell me about it."

"I murdered my wife," Trumbull repeated after me again.

"What did you do it for?"

I could not at the moment recollect why I had murdered Florence, so I merely said to him: "I murdered my wife;" and Trumbull repeated it.

"What with?" asked the judge.

I struggled to answer, but that fact, too, had gone from me. So long had I concentrated on the one phrase that it was all I seemed to form, with projective desire. And so, all that Judge Goldman could get from Trumbull was: "I murdered my wife."

He called the district attorney and coroner on the phone, holding Trumbull until certain formalities had been attended to, regarding Mrs. Trumbull.

I had put my message through! I had found my lost opportunity and seized it! Joyfully I hurried to the house Florence and I had lived in.

Florence was waiting for me in the big, dark library.

"Harry," she said, "what awful thing have you done?"

"I have sent the truth through at last!" I cried. "I have killed the lie! *I am free!*"

"Go back to Trumbull," she said, "and see what you've done."

"I will as soon as I have changed my clothes," I replied.

Going up to my room to make the change, I found, to my astonishment, that I was more firmly bound than ever.

Quiveringly I descended the stairs, crying out to my wife:

"You lied to me, Florence! My bonds are tighter than ever! Even my hands are chained!"

"Instead of trying to help poor Joe," she replied, "you used his mind for your own selfish purposes, and in so doing you have thrown yourself backward instead of forward."

"God!" I groaned.

"Go see," she said.

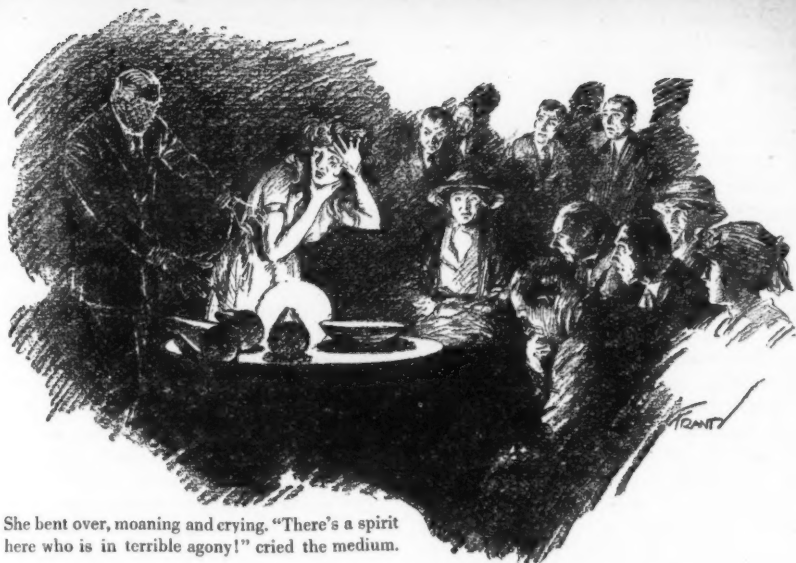
Trumbull's house was full of folk who whispered together in tones of awe and horror; and I heard them saying that he had murdered her. They were wondering what it had been about, declaring that he had loved her. Trumbull was not there.

I went to the judge's house in search of him. He was not there. Then I went up one street and down another. Finally, I began canvassing the town, house by house. The one place I overlooked was where I finally found him—the jail.

"What are you doing here, Trumbull?" I asked.

He did not answer me, his mind being quite a blank.

In a state of great perturbation I went to see Judge Goldman, and by looking into his mind I discovered what had actually happened. Trumbull had been arrested for poisoning his wife with morphine.



She bent over, moaning and crying. "There's a spirit here who is in terrible agony!" cried the medium.

Certainly I had not expected any such result as this!

I went screaming through the streets, crying out that Trumbull was innocent, that it was I who had committed murder! But no one heeded me! Again I sought Trumbull in his cell.

"You did not murder your wife!"

"You did not murder your wife," he repeated after me.

"No, no," I cried, "You, Trumbull, did not murder *your* wife!"

Like a parrot he said the exact words I had uttered.

Then it came to me—the words that I must say! I drew back hesitatingly. My last words on the earth plane rushed up to me.

*"It's a lie! I did not murder my wife, and I pray that you may one and all be punished for the injustice you are doing me!"*

Those words had put me in chains; they had bound me to my festering body.

If Trumbull was to deny his guilt I

must voice that denial for him in the first person! What it would do to me, what effect it would have on my future, I could not guess. A great, shuddering fear was upon me. I went out and away from him. I dared not let those accursed words pass my lips!

But the full knowledge of what I had done, of the thing that he faced, was upon me, and I went back to the jail. His lawyer was just entering his cell.

"Trumbull," he said, "you have confessed your guilt. Is it your intention to plead insanity?"

Instantly I took hold of Trumbull's mind and said to him:

"I lied. I did not murder my wife."

I fell to trembling because of the thing I'd said.

"Then, what in God's name made you say you did?" asked the lawyer.

"Hamilton told me to say it," Trumbull repeated after me.

The lawyer looked at him curiously.

"Trumbull," he said, "do you know what you're saying?"

"Yes," he replied, "I'm denying that I murdered my wife or that I had anything to do with her death."

I sank down, weak coward that I was.

"No, I mean," put in the lawyer, "what you said about Hamilton."

"Yes, he told me to say that I—no that he—murdered my wife—no—that I—I can't recollect."

I got all confused, and the more I whispered to him the more he got tangled. I let go of his mind, saying as I did so:

"Trumbull, speak for yourself. You know what you did. You're not crazy. Come out of it!"

I snapped the cord that I had put around his intelligence on the evening of my entrance into his house. His thoughts were suddenly freed. He began talking quietly, sanely to his lawyer. He told how he had come home and found his wife dead, and the box of morphine on the mantel. His mind had been a blank since then, until this minute. He was not crazy, nor could he account for the thing he had said. He did not even recollect having mentioned my name just a moment before. He was astonished at his arrest, but would not plead insanity.

I went out sick with dread, wondering what would happen to me now, as a result of what I had been forced to repeat into Trumbull's mind, to clear him.

Miserably I went toward the graveyard. Florence was there ahead of me.

"Fearing the complete loss of your own freedom," she smiled as I went draggably toward her, "you did your utmost to free Trumbull, and by that act have freed yourself."

"Thank God!" I cried.

And so great was my relief and gratitude that I fell on my face and wept.

"Unselfishness is the rarest thing in the universe because the most difficult

to achieve," she went on. "It never goes astray. Not only have you lifted yourself out of the hideousness of your body, but you have bound all the earth workers to your cause. Thousands of spirits are now at work trying to project your message for you."

"It wasn't so much to do," I said.

"I merely thought it was."

"It was as much as your thought conceived it. A great fear made it a great sacrifice!"

She left me, and I found myself in a soft bed. A delicious odor had awakened me, and rising hastily I descended my own stairs to find that Jane had prepared for me one of her old-time breakfasts. I ate ravenously. After that I had no need of food, it being an earth love from which I was freed.

Still bound, but so much happier than I had been these many days, I was almost inclined to forget my purpose of conveying the truth to my friends. But I was stopped now and again by radiant forms, who had passed me silently heretofore. They discussed the matter with me frankly, as a problem which was no longer mine alone, but one which they shared. Every one talked ways and means. Sensitive minds were named and psychic circles considered. I seemed well on the way to freedom.

Not so Trumbull. He was in serious difficulties; perfectly sane, with no possible plea of insanity, he could not explain his confession in the first place. It was held by the prosecution that the shock of what he had done had made him tell the truth, which he had later been advised by his lawyer to deny.

If it is a trait of human nature to want to believe the best of a dead man, it is also a trait to kick a falling body, to come forward with insignificant incidents which may be easily distorted into damning evidence against a man accused. Everybody is determined to make it as difficult as possible for him.

This was what Trumbull's acquaintances and neighbors were doing. The fine, tender love he had given his wife was pushed aside to make room for the puerile disagreements of husband and wife, which had amounted to nothing until now that the husband was fighting for his life.

So astonishingly did they pile up the evidence that it seemed as if this innocent man was doomed to pay for my crime.

The thing was so unjust, so out of all proportion, that I could not tolerate the thought of it. I was in a panic. I had caused it! Not a soul came forward with the statement that the woman took morphine. Clearly, nobody knew it. I had to save him!

I was like a raving maniac, praying, crying, calling in agony of soul to all the forces of good, for help. Joe Trumbull, instead of Harry Hamilton, had suddenly become my problem.

The trial covered several days. The district attorney was particularly bitter. This was the second case of wife murder that had occurred in the town. To treat such crimes lightly would be to encourage dissatisfied husbands and wives to take a chance on ridding themselves permanently of their encumbrances. The state could not afford to support such men. Therefore the district attorney recommended that Trumbull be given the full penalty of the law.

With a final, bitter summing up, the state rested. The judge solemnly charged the jurymen to do their duty; and they filed out.

I went with them.

I made up my mind that never should this jury come out of that room with a verdict of guilty.

The first thing I did, however, upon entering the room, was to investigate the mental equipment of those twelve men. I made little effort to fasten myself on those who were governed by

reason, preferring to act on the more emotional natures.

The minute I looked into Dave Hudson's one-groove mind, I knew that he was the man who would hang the jury one way or the other. I instantly fastened myself upon him, to the exclusion of them all, until I had made him commit himself. Then I left him and turned to the others.

For three days and three nights we argued, quarreled, joked, told irrelevant stories, and came back to our disagreement in that hot, stuffy room.

To think long and arduously is more tiring, perhaps, than strenuous physical labor. To think in twelve minds is the labor of an Atlas. Sometimes I felt as if I must sink down from exhaustion into mental oblivion.

On the third day, the five men with whom I had labored most began yielding out of sheer weariness. But Dave Hudson held on.

The foreman, finally realizing that the walls of Troy had been reached, and that nothing could batter down the egotism of this little man, took his jury into court without having reached a decision. This entailed impaneling another jury, and resulted in a postponement.

I went in to see Trumbull. He looked much as if he didn't care what happened. Mrs. Trumbull was with him, and so great was her gratitude to me that she kissed my hand.

"You told me," I said, "that you took an overdose of morphine. Where did you get it?"

"The doctor."

"What doctor?"

She had forgotten.

"Don't bother. I'll find out, somehow."

After canvassing the town, I discovered that Mrs. Trumbull had been seen going to the office of Doctor Savoy, now in the army of occupation in Germany.

I went to see Savoy that night, and found that he knew nothing of the Trumbull trial, that he had given Mrs. Trumbull prescriptions, up to his departure for overseas, and, also, that after a wild scene in his office in which she had threatened to kill herself if he went away leaving her without the drug, he had given her the name of a man, Dude Harper, whom he suspected of bootlegging.

The next thing was to find this man. I succeeded after much delay, through the usual process of the draft board and adjutant general. I located him on shipboard at Brest.

Now, my problem was to bring the knowledge of the Trumbull trial to Doctor Savoy in Berlin, and to Dude Harper on an American battleship in Brest. For a material man, this problem would have been very simple. A letter to each of them, with newspaper clippings of the trial, would have been sufficient. But as a man on this plane cannot write letters, except through the hand of another, nor cut clippings and mail them, I had struck a snag. Also, there was small chance that Dude Harper would come forward with a confession, even if I were to succeed in bringing the case to his attention.

It came to me that there was but one method by which I could reach him—his superstition.

To this end I put Mrs. Trumbull on his case, telling her exactly what to do and leaving the matter in her hands for the moment, while I gave attention to Doctor Savoy. There was absolutely no way of carrying the message to him. I made him think of Mrs. Trumbull constantly, but that did no good. He was not a psychic man, and I could not declare a complete thought into his mind.

There is only one thing to do with a mind like that. I did it. I caused him to trip in a dark hall, fall down a narrow stairway, and break a leg.

We are not often permitted to use violent methods like this, but in a case in which the urgency is recognized by our directors over here, and where a definite good is to be accomplished, we are given power over material forces.

It was an outrageous thing for a young doctor to go through the war and then have to be invalidated home with a broken leg, after it was all over! But I had to get him home before the next term of court. Having got him safely started, I went back to the battleship and found that Mrs. Trumbull had been creating great excitement on board. Not only had she appeared to Dude in dreams, but owing to the general atmosphere of superstition prevailing on ships, she had been enabled to materialize.

In fact, they had helped her development so that she had appeared to Dude and been recognized by him. He had instantly written home to find out if she were dead. She had continued to appear to him until the letter returned from his sister bringing full information about the Trumbull case. Without hesitation, he got leave, went ashore to the American consul, and made complete confession of having sold Mrs. Trumbull a large quantity of morphine just before sailing for France.

This confession was in the hands of Trumbull's lawyers when the case came to trial the third time. Also, Doctor Savoy testified that Mrs. Trumbull had, to his knowledge, been addicted to morphine for several years. The jury, after a few minutes, brought in the verdict of "not guilty."

I had given months of valuable time to the Trumbulls. I turned wearily back to my own case. My spirit flagged. I felt that I had not the courage to go on. A great desire was on me to get away somewhere—anywhere, from the curious tangles that knit themselves about mortal men, and so sorely harass them. But no hope was in me!



I shuddered to think of what would have happened to me had I failed to clear Trumbull.

"Oh, God! what next?" I cried, sitting wearily on the courthouse steps, my head bowed in my hands. As always, when I called for help, Florence came. It seems to be one of the curious workings of fate over here, that those you have wronged most in the material world are those to whom you must look for help.

"Come, Harry," Florence said.

"I'm too tired," I replied. "I think I shall just stay here forever on these steps."

"It's your fetters," she replied, "that weary you. You've worn them long enough. Get up and step out of them."

I looked at her in amazement, but rose.

"I feel like a feather," I said.

"You were carrying around a terrible weight," she smiled.

And I looked down and found that all my chains had fallen away.

"How's this?" I said.

"During these months when you have been busy about another man's problem you have severed the chains that bound you. By unselfish labor you have accomplished what might have been a work of many years. Selfishness tightened your bonds. In no other way

than by unselfishness could you have worked out to truth."

"But I haven't put the truth through," I said, wearily conscious that I was not through.

"The way is open," she said.

I followed Florence to Trumbull's house. Mrs. Trumbull was there, and Trumbull was looking at her with the frightened expression of material man at the spirit he so recently loved in its fleshly clothes.

"She acquired the power of materialization through your efforts for Trumbull," said Florence. "His endless question of why he confessed as he did, has helped her appear to him. He is going to write a letter. You take hold of his hand and write your message."

"Not I!" I said. "Never again will I try to seize a man's mind or hand for the purpose of delivering my message. Unless some other way presents, I shall stay close to earth, which I have come to loathe. Thank God that I no longer wear chains, and sleep in it!"

Florence threw back her head and laughed.

"That was the last test of your selfishness," she said. "You have won! To-night you will find a welcome in an open mind, to which you may deliver your message in full, with a request that it be given complete to the world."

## LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG

HE was so very old that he tottered as he walked. His hair was white. His cheeks were sunken.

But she had all the glory of youth—bright golden hair—the warmth of summer in her cheeks—lips red like precious wine—

"Just one kiss," he pleaded.

For a moment she was reluctant. Then he reached into his pocket and drew forth a glistening coin.

Her eyes sparkled. She kissed him.

"You are a nice granddad," she said, taking the nickel from his palsied fingers.

CARL GLICK.

# The All-Important Subject of Dress

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

IN the hurly-burly of our affairs, all sorts of men, from august and dignified ecclesiastics to obscure little town officials, find time and occasion to criticise the conduct of women in relation to their habiliments.

Has all tradition been lost sight of in the present modes? What is the explanation for any deviation from past aesthetics in dress and general feminine adornment? Just because the world has been so unspeakably gray and grim during the past five years, just because men have lived through untold horrors, are the present fashions for women more spectacular, richer, more colorful than in many decades?

As a matter of fact, what would become of things if women neglected the fashions? From time immemorial, the subject, as we shall see, has given men a theme upon which to sharpen their rapiers. Yet all the condemnation and all the ridicule in the world, from the opposite sex, only adds zest and interest—*color*, if you please—to the passing show. It would be a somber world indeed, bereft of the everchanging, kaleidoscopic cycle of fashion.

Strange as it may seem, while the very earth appears to be rocking in insecurity beneath our feet, we have reached a keener realization of true values; there has been a general breaking down of barriers. Every dough-

boy, whatever his natural inheritance, returns from the front with bigger ideas. His appreciation of values is keener, his appraisal less restricted, no longer confined within the narrow sphere of his prewar life.

As illustrative of this point, the following incident is full of the psychology of the moment. An ex-army boy is chauffeuring for a well-known American family, an elderly member of which, on alighting from her car, displayed a pair of *cotton stockings*. In relating the incident the doughboy exclaimed: "That made me sick!" Now his mother undoubtedly also wears cotton stockings, but that fact does not make him sick, because his appreciation of values is keener. His hard-working mother should wear cotton hose but a member of a representative American family, riding in her own limousine, shows not only poor taste but actual penury by doing so.

With his expanded world views, his sense of beauty, the most fundamental sense of all, embraces the universe, which has never been so pulsating, so colorful as it is to-day, and it finds its best expression in woman and her adornments.

The present apparently mad and daring fashions are not without precedent. All periods of depression have been followed by fashions of the gayest. It

is a perfectly natural reaction. Witness the times of Charles II, when England once more felt secure after the civil wars, and the period after the French Revolution, when, the Reign of Terror ended, the Merveilleuse sought to revive the garb of classical antiquity—the Athenian costume and that of the Lacedæmonian girls, whose tunics were slit from the hips all the way down the sides, or the skirts looped up on the left, above the knee, and held in place there with a jeweled clasp.

One writer records a wager in which a lady bet that her dress, including trinkets, did not weigh more than two pounds. She afterward retired and took off the dress, which when it was weighed, with the rest of her raiment, turned the scales at a little over one pound.

One of the dresses of this period acquired the name of the "female savage." It consisted of a gauze chemise over pink fleshings with golden garters. What wonder that such costuming brought down the condemnation of the church?

Pope Benedict's recent protest against present-day fashions is also not without precedent. On the sixteenth of October, 1800, the following "bull" was issued from Rome:

"The Pope, so long engaged in reducing the Gallican Church within the Catholic pale, has not been negligent of the duty of recalling the female form within the petticoat and the handkerchief."

After speaking in appropriate terms of the present scarcity of clothing and of the sensations it may excite even in the withered bosom of a monk, and quoting the authority of St. Clemens of Alexandria, His Holiness strictly enjoins his officers, civil and ecclesiastical, to repress by fine and corporal punishment, according to the circumstances of the case, these crying enormities. He directs, too, that punishment be ex-

tended to such damsels who, though they at first sight appear properly attired, are nevertheless decked in transparent robes, and also to those who, with a voluptuous and magnificent attire, display themselves in their seductive and tempting attitudes.

Moreover, fathers, husbands, and heads of families, who weakly or negligently permit their wives, daughters, or servants to trespass against these rules, shall not escape with impunity. Also, all tailors, haberdashers, milliners, hairdressers, and others who contribute to these enormities of dress shall in no wise go unpunished.

The "bull" further declares that: "all priests, confessors, overseers, church-wardens, and others shall in no wise admit such delinquents to the Holy Supper; that they shall not allow women improperly dressed to enter the church, and if they come they shall be driven out, and if they resist, the higher powers shall be required to lend their aid."

The demand for beauty was never greater at any period in the world's history than it is to-day, but it has, nevertheless, always existed.

About 1430 one Lorenzo Valla wrote in Latin a dialogue "On Pleasure or Concerning the True Good." Says he: "Virtue for its own sake is an empty word, and the most pleasure-giving things are health and beauty—especially beauty, for the more health we have the less we know it, but the possession of beauty is a conscious joy forever. What," he asks, "is sweeter, what more delectable, what more adorable, than a fair face?" And since beauty is not of the face merely, he would have beautiful women in summer go lightly clad or clad not at all. This brings us to the rationality of female apparel in all its scantiness, from the standpoint of health as well as beauty.

Scientists have again and again called

our attention to the undoubted fact that woman is possessed of far more vitality and endurance than man, and this despite the certainty that she is the "weaker vessel" and called upon by nature to suffer immeasurably more. "Man is more prone to rheumatism, cancer, brain troubles, sudden death from internal and external causes. He can less easily survive severe surgical operations. He grows old more rapidly; his hair is gray earlier. He is more prone to loss of sight, hearing, memory, senile irritability, to deformities and anomalies." Thus an ancient American psychologist sums up. This greater endurance and hardihood is doubtless a direct result of fashions, whereby woman has become inured to changes of temperature and atmospheric conditions to which men, less fortified, succumb.

Many fashions have been designed to hide anatomical defects as well as to enhance beauty. Fads and peculiarities, even deformities of royalties, have thus come under the designers' hands, and so been lifted into the domain of fashion.

In Queen Elizabeth's time a tremendous impetus was given to dress and all its appurtenances because of the well-known homeliness of the Queen. There was no special beauty of design but there was great costliness of materials. Silk stockings were worn by Elizabeth for the first time in 1560. Shoes were raised three inches in height by the aid of thick cork soles and high heels, thus adding to the Queen's "presence." It is during her reign that we first hear of "make-up." To such an extent was "make-up" used at this period that Bishop Hall, censoring the fashions in a sermon, said: "Hear this, ye plaster-faced Jezebels! God will one day wash you with fire and brimstone."

Thus does history repeat itself. "Make-up" has permeated every grade of society at the present time, and to-

day we hear that Parisiennes are using brown and various other colored powders to match their costumes, or to carry out more completely the borrowed fringed skirt and complexion of the Sandwich Islanders. Ropes upon ropes of varicolored and barbaric beads, with perhaps breastplates, will seem a fitting accompaniment to this fad of the moment. Men may rail at bizarre fashions and at the present high cost of living, and may, at special conferences called to decide on these and allied grave questions, demand that women cut down their style, but—who makes and forces the fashions, and who encourages woman in her caprices?

It is a well-known fact that every self-respecting man wishes to see his family well dressed, abreast of the times. As his income increases he wants this reflected in the clothes of his womenfolk. Those of precarious position are prone to admonish their wives to "doll up" in order to make an impression. Those who are continually accusing women of dressing to attract the attention of men really show little judgment in the matter. Does not the male of the species inspire as well as encourage the folly?

The beautifully mannered, sweet-voiced Josephine enslaved Napoleon in spite of donning a high waist and shapeless gown, but Josephine was a divine goddess in form, and the diaphanous robes were well cut and made to hang gracefully in superb lines. It was after she became empress that fortunes were spent on her clothes, as became her exalted station and her times.

Most women are really bored by the endless change in fashions. Then why do they follow the modes? In other words, what do women dress for? Certainly not for men, because the average male knows very little and understands less about clothes and the fashions. Men are conventional and exceedingly timorous when it comes to clothes, while

here, if in nothing else, women are daring. It is, in most instances, a waste of effort to dress for men. In general, men admire black. Give them tailored simplicity by day, and a black gown for evening wear, and they are happy. Why? Because they understand such garments. And the explanation lies in the fact that in the days of the early Greeks and Romans, colors, as we see them to-day, did not exist. True, they have always existed in nature, but primitive man had a poorly developed color sense; he possessed only a limited range of color vision.

Xenophanes is quoted as seeing only three colors in the rainbow: red, green, and violet. The oldest paintings also support the conclusion drawn from literature, namely, that the color sense of the ancients was undeveloped. The eye, as a matter of fact, is a highly differentiated organ of comparatively recent evolution. Our recognition and appreciation of color is just beginning. Many men to-day, as far as their color sense is concerned, are still in the condition of the primitive male of a million years ago, who saw all objects in tones of whites, grays, and blacks. This new faculty of the mind, that of perceiving color, is, like a great many other things, far more highly developed in woman. Therefore, change and color are absolutely essential to her health and happiness.

Historians like to dwell upon the splendid housewifery of the Roman matron, giving special emphasis to her training in spinning and weaving, whereby she provided the clothing of the entire household. We should not fail to contrast the undeveloped state of her color sense with that of our women, and to note that the austerity of her clothing, were we forced to endure it to-day, would unquestionably have a disastrous effect upon our highly differentiated nerve centers.

The woman who desires beyond any-

thing else to dress pleasingly for men can do so on very little; on what to-day is a trifling expenditure of money and thought. But women do not follow the fashions and change chameleonlike overnight to attract men, but to win the approbation of other women! They dress for each other mainly. When this is not the chief underlying motive, then they dress to please themselves.

Women are still childlike. They love change and color. In the management of color lies the secret of all artistic creation in dress. Everything that is modish is not suitable and it is this fact that the average woman overlooks. She is continually struggling for an outward expression of her inner desire for beauty and she turns to the fashions of the moment, without considering their adaptation to her type.

There is undoubtedly within every human being an ardent love for the beautiful. Men seek it in women; women seek it in themselves and in adornment. Ugliness is to most, even to the wholly unsophisticated and uneducated, a rude shock, and would prove far more disastrous in its reactions upon the nervous system did we not continually look for its opposite everywhere. All nature is divinely beautiful, and we unconsciously endeavor to emulate her.

The passing modes confuse the uninitiated, who, by striving to apply them or to imitate them, invite unjust criticism. It should be understood that it is not the *fashions*, but the women who adopt them, who call down upon all without modification the condemnation justly deserved by but a few.

Men forget that in former days their own male ancestors sold out whole principalities to keep up with the fashions. When, as is the case in modern communities, women of wealth and position may, with impunity, wear only enough clothing to cover part of their nakedness, while ignorant young girls,

striving for a similar *effect in beauty*, are given into the care of police matrons, with the charge that lack of clothing in young girls leads to delinquency, there is something radically wrong with our psychology.

"One may as well be out of the world as out of fashion," is by no means a new slogan. Having inherited it with many other traits and characteristics from a long line of ancestors, it is only natural that the girl of to-day should adopt the fashions offered her. Novelty is always welcome, especially in youth. We must adapt ourselves or obliterate ourselves. Unfortunately it is in the very adaptation that the average girl blunders.

To be conspicuous is not to achieve individuality in dress. To dress becomingly one must study the effect on one's type of those slight deviations in style which are evident from year to year, and leave the extreme changes for

those who seek notoriety in this field—for nothing invites critical attention so quickly as obtrusive raiment. The young girl who seeks expression in the fashions belies her own sense of modesty when she adopts fashions reconcilable only to the demimonde. Let her confine herself to that which befits her occupation in life. Time, occasion, and above all, individual type must be considered.

Each woman should make a conscious study of her own type and adopt from the prevailing modes such as will enhance her attractions and subdue her weak physical points. Then will her innate desire for beauty find expression in raiment and adornment that is fitting, pleasing, and becoming.

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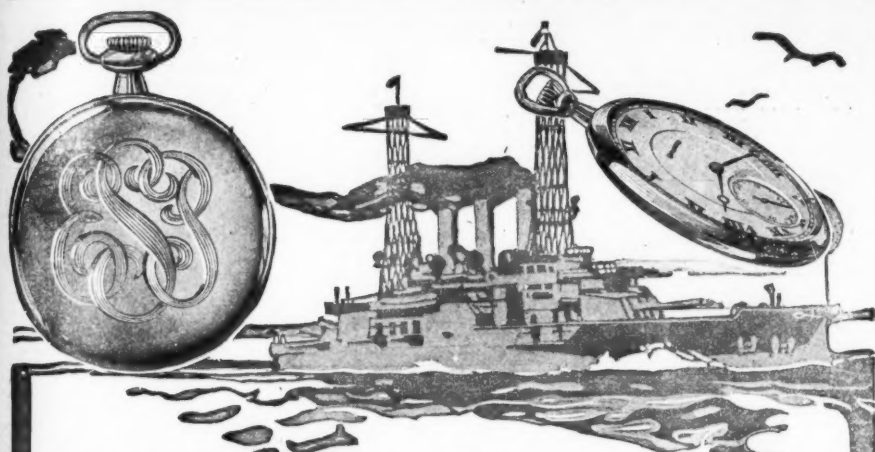
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**DON'T** spend a penny. Send your name and finger size and say, "I want a Lachnite moment, a solid gold ring on 10 days' free trial. I will send it prepaid right to your home. When it comes merely deposit \$4.75 with the postman and then wear the ring for 10 full days. If you or any of your friends can tell it from a diamond, send it back. If you decide to try it—send \$2.00 a month until \$10. It has been said 'Write Today' Send your name now. Tell us which of the said gold rings you prefer. Above you wish (under 6 men's). Be sure to send your finger size."

Harold Lachman Co., 22 N. Michigan Ave., Dept. 1703 Chicago

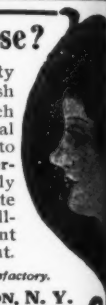


## You Have a Beautiful Face—But Your Nose?

**I**N this day and age attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you wish to appear as attractive as possible for your own self-satisfaction, which is alone well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly, if not wholly, by your "looks," therefore it pays to "look your best" at all times. Permit no one to see you looking otherwise; it will injure your welfare? Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life—which is to be your ultimate destiny? My new Nose-Shaper "TRADOS" (Model 24) corrects now ill-shaped noses without operation quickly, safely and permanently. Is pleasant and does not interfere with one's daily occupation, being worn at night.

*Write today for free booklet, which tells you how to correct Ill-Shaped Noses without cost if not satisfactory.*

**M. TRILETY, Face Specialist, 1407 Ackerman Bldg., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.**



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"MODERN" DUPLICATOR—A Business Getter. \$1.50 up. 50 to 75 copies from pen, pencil, typewriter; no glue or gelatine. 40,000 firms use it. 30 days' trial. You need one. Booklet free. L. T. Durkin, Reeces & Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.

### Farm Lands

**RAISE BIG CROPS** on our splendid hardwood lands in Michigan. No swamps or stones. Only \$15 to \$35 per A. Easy terms. 10 to 160 A. Schools, churches, markets, R. R. Fine climate; pure water, lakes & streams. Money loaned to settlers. Oldest and largest company. Write today for free booklet. Swigart Land Co., X1265, First Nat'l Bk. Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

### Wanted to Buy

**CASH FOR OLD FALSE TEETH.**—We pay up to \$35.00 per set (broken or not). Also buy discarded gold jewelry, gold crowns, bridges, platinum, diamonds, watches and silver. Send now. Cash by return mail. Package held 5 to 10 days for sender's approval of our offer. U. S. Smelting Works, Dept. 64, Chicago, Ill.

**MAIL DIRECT TO THE REFINERS** any old gold, silver, magnetite points, old watches, diamonds, platinum, old or broken jewelry, false teeth, gold or silver ore or nuggets. War Bonds & Stamps. Send them to us today. Highest prices paid in cash by return mail. Goods returned in 10 days if you're not satisfied. The Ohio Smelting & Refining Co., 253 Lennox Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

### Coins, Stamps, etc.

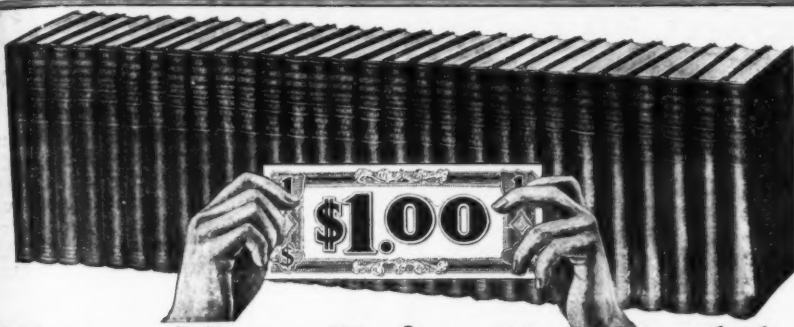
**WE BUY OLD MONEY.** Hundreds of dates worth \$2 to \$500 each. Keep all old money, you may have valuable coins. Be posted, send 10c for New Illustrated Buying Price List, size 4x6. Clarke Coin Co., Box 33, Le Roy, N. Y.

**OLD Coins.** Large Spring Selling Catalogue of Coins for Sale, free. Catalogue quoting prices paid for coins, ten cents. William Hessein, 101 Tremont St., Dept. 6 Boston, Mass.

**158 GENUINE FOREIGN STAMPS.** Mexico War Issues, Venezuela, Railroad and India Service, Guatemala, China, etc. Only 10c. Finest approval sheets 50¢ a 60¢. Agents wanted. Big 72-page, 50¢ free. We buy stamps. Established 5 years. Hussman Stamp Co., Dept. 65, St. Louis, Mo.

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# Now as Never Before You Need the Encyclopaedia Britannica HANDY VOLUME ISSUE

War awoke this great land of ours and set the stage for a tremendous industrial, spiritual and social awakening. There probably is not a man, woman or child among the more than 100,000,000 inhabitants of the United States upon whom the past five years has not had a profound effect. Great reforms are being hastened and this will be a better and cleaner world after the ordeals of fire through which it has passed. The participation of the United States as never before in the world's affairs has brought to the people new interests not limited to the neighborhood, town or city in which they live, but interests that are world wide. A miracle has been wrought in men's minds, a miracle in which there is a tremendous thirst for knowledge, a knowledge which is absolutely necessary today, as never before. Where can people find correct, authoritative and comprehensive information on the many different subjects in which they are interested, as a consequence of this awakening? They naturally turn to the wonderful storehouse of knowledge—the world's greatest guide to correct and authoritative information—The Encyclopaedia Britannica. The Britannica furnishes practical, detailed and authoritative articles of great value to the business man, to the manufacturer, to the importer, to the worker in the industries. The Britannica will give a foundation for study of subjects which will be uppermost in our minds for years to come. It is the book for Americans today who are waking up to new thoughts, new work and new interests.

## A Complete Library of Knowledge.

But this marvellous work with its 41,000 separate articles is more than a guide for the enterprising business man of the United States, fitting him to be a citizen of the world—a world merchant. The Britannica is a complete library of knowledge on every subject. It discusses in a way that you can understand every branch of science, industry, literature, art, religion, inventions and engineering; history and race development; wars and peace; architecture, astronomy, chemistry, sociology, education, steam, electricity, geology and geography, biography, law and physics. You and your family will find in the Britannica a liberal education. In answer to the hundred questions which every day come to your mind and to your wife's and children's minds—it will tell you more about everything than you can get from any other source.

## What Is Before Us?

There are many serious post-war problems confronting us. Do you understand the tendencies in our industrial life? Why are the prices of commodities high? Will wages go still higher or down? Will the cost of living gradually drop? Is there likely to be some great cataclysm that will serve to send prices and wages tumbling downward? Are you inclined to be stampeded with fear of what is before us? Are you sitting

down and studying the facts of past cases that were somewhat similar? Are you familiar with what has happened after other wars? In England after the Napoleonic campaigns; in the United States after the Civil War; to France, to Germany and to neutrals after the Franco-Prussian war?

This wonderful book of knowledge—the new Encyclopaedia Britannica—literally brings the whole world to the reader. It tells all about foreign countries, their people, their history, their progress, their resources, their imports and exports. An hour a day with the Britannica will give you as clear and comprehensive an idea of the rest of the world as we Americans now have of the States of the Union.

## Woman Needs the Britannica as Never Before.

The war has changed the status of women industrially and politically. The mother must keep abreast of the great thoughts and movements that are taking place throughout the world, that are vitally affecting her. Woman today in her greater and more important place in the world needs the Encyclopaedia Britannica as never before—she needs it to teach her how to fulfill her new status as a citizen—how to make her more efficient in the business world and, as a mother, to make herself broader and a bigger woman so she can teach her children wisely and correctly.

**\$1** As First Payment brings you this Complete Set of 29 Volumes Containing 44,000,000 Words, 30,000 Pages, 15,000 Maps and Illustrations. The balance is in Small Monthly Payments.

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Our present small stock of sets is printed on the genuine India paper—the light, thin but opaque sheet which has proved an ideal medium on which to print the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Act today—NOW—by clipping the coupon and sending for the beautifully illustrated book telling all about the Britannica.

**Sears, Roebuck and Co.**  
Chicago, Ill.

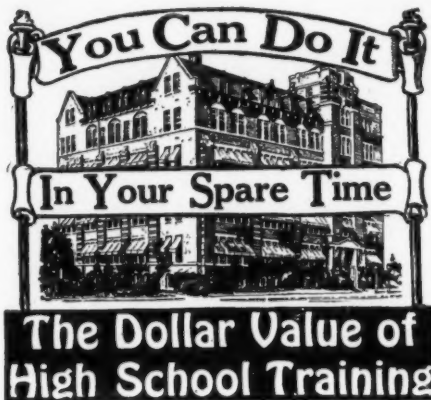
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## A GOOD FLORIDA (17c) LUNCHEON

Along about Christmas time a little town in Florida held a Farmers' Rally, and Clubwomen were able to give the 500 persons in attendance a splendid Noon-luncheon, according to press reports—for cents per plate. Most of the articles appearing on the Menu were *home-grown*.

The High-Cost-of-Living today is bearing down most heavily on salaried folks—managers, clerks, professional men, and others of that class. According to Bradstreet's, living costs stood last December 131 per cent above pre-war level. Praising extravagance and inflation of the currency all have their effect, but the fundamental, underlying cause of the troubles is UNDER-PRODUCTION.

Florida growers, however, need worry but about their own living costs, when you consider the big prices they receive for luxuries shipped north in mid-winter. The Christmas strawberries brought them from 90c to \$1.00 and as high as \$1.46 per quart, after shipping and selling expenses were paid. In December Green Beans brought close to \$6.00 per hamper in New York. Tomatoes shipped to Northern markets brought \$2.75 to \$4.00 per crate, and Peppers \$3.25.

The Leesburg Commercial states: "We visited a twelve-acre farm Saturday—ten acres in field and the crop sold on the trees this season for \$10,000 cash. Cost of production was \$2,000, leaving \$8,000 for interest on the investment—nearly 18 per cent on a value of \$5,000 per acre."

These are not "Pipe Dreams"; they are **Florida Facts**. Grove land that is at present in uncultivated state will not last forever in Florida—note the lesson of California. I own a farm offering for sale in Orange County some of the finest orange and trucking lands in the State.

Truck gardeners near Orlando cleared as high as \$1,500 an acre from head lettuce last year. We have copies of their signed testimonial letters in our book. Many of these truck gardeners are Northern men and they know our summer climate is cool and more pleasant than in Northern States.

Here is OPPORTUNITY reduced to its simplest terms. All you need is a moderate amount of capital and a little knowledge of farming. We will clear and cultivate your land on our fair and equitable **TEN PER CENT ABOVE COST PLAN**. Send for our Big Free Book—**TWENTY ACRES AND PLENTY**. It tells all about our dollar-an-acre monthly payments, sick and out-of-work clauses and other attractive features.

Address Sylvester E. Wilson, Dept. R2, Orlando, Florida

(NOTE: Mr. Wilson is Treasurer and principal owner of the Produce Reporter Company, Chicago publishers of the "Blue Book," which is in the Fruit and Produce Trade what Dun's and Bradstreet are in other commercial fields.)

# SALESMEN

RETAIL CLERK TEACHER DOCTOR ENGINEER  
PLUMBER LAWYER POLICEMAN GROCER  
BOOKKEEPER CHAUFFEUR BARBER DRUGGIST  
MINER PAINTER SWITCHMAN FIREMAN ELECTRICIAN  
MACHINIST DENTIST FARMER ARTIST

## Salesmen Top Them All In Making Money!



### Read What Others Have Done

**America's \$52 a Week**  
After six months success as a Training Salesman in a position secured through your Employment Bureau, I am earning \$52 a week. F. W. Powell, 728 Benedict Ave., Woodward, N. K.

**Earned \$524 in Two Weeks**  
I had never earned more than \$70 a month. Last week I earned \$500 and this week \$524. You have done wonders for me. Geo. W. Kearns, 107 W. Park Place, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

**Earned \$6,500 Last Year**  
I formerly earned \$800 a month. Last year I earned \$6,500 and was promoted to Sales Manager. Full credit due you. C. W. Birmingham, 129 Oak St., Dayton, Ohio.

**Earns \$375 in a Month**  
For ten years I worked for a railroad. Was drawing \$10 a month when I left. You secured me my position. I am earning \$375 in a month. E. C. Tozer, 2121 Andrews St., Rockford, Illinois.

Choose wisely in deciding on your life's work! Don't be a drifter! Don't be a wage slave! Stop working for the other fellow. Stop breaking your neck and your back for barely enough to exist on. Get into a line of work where you get full credit for what you do. The salesman knows what he's worth because his sales sheets SHOW! The salesman is independent because his earnings depend on himself! The good salesman can sell ANYTHING. All fields are open to him. He can travel the Country over or stay in his own city. He is respected, looked up to, admired. It's the cream of jobs.

### The Best Paying Work You Can Do!

Think of the young lawyer after years of hard study, waiting for a case! Think of the young doctor after years of effort, waiting for a patient. Think of the years of apprenticeship necessary in practically all other kinds of work and the pitiful wages afterward. Then think how easy it is to learn the secrets of Successful Salesmanship and the BIG MONEY you earn right from the start in this fascinating, brilliant "game."

### Do You Want to Get Married? Do You Want to Own an Auto or a Home? Do You Want a Bigger Bank Account?

You must earn more money. Prices on everything have soared. Look what clothes cost. Look what a decent meal costs. Look what rent amounts to. You must overcome high prices by **EARNING** more. You can't do it unless you make yourself **WORTH** more. Cash in on your brain power. Turn your natural abilities into the proper channel. You can make more money as a **STAR SALESMAN**, with less study, than any other profession or trade you can name. You don't have to be an expert in ANYTHING except in **MAKING PEOPLE SEE THINGS YOUR WAY**. Let the other fellow produce new inventions. Let the other fellow do the manufacturing but **YOU KEEP THEM BUSY WITH ORDERS!** That's what they must have to keep the wheels going. That's why **STAR SALESMEN** earn \$2500 to \$10,000 and over per year.

**You Can Become a Star Salesman** Let me send you my wonderful new book, "A Knight of the Grip," which tells about salesmanship in all its details. Let me tell you about the National Salesmen's Training Association and the special instructions which include every branch of selling and lessons on Language and Persuasion, Memory Training, Retail Selling, Advertising, Direct by Mail Selling, etc. I want to show you how we have trained thousands of others. I'll show you success letters we have received from hundreds of members. I'll show you what our Course includes and how it goes into every detail of Salesmanship from the ground up, covering Wholesale Houses, Specialty Houses, Retail Houses—how it covers every detail of the proposition, methods of distribution, territory covering, handling customers, personal efficiency, etc. I'll tell you about our Free Employment Bureau, which constantly has on file more requests for salesmen than we can possibly fill. Get all the facts by writing TODAY.

### Write For My New Book—FREE

I want to send you my new book, "A Knight of the Grip," which tells all about our system of Salesmanship Training and Employment Service, in which we have specialized for more than twelve years. It tells you just what you want to know. If you are getting along slowly—if you are dissatisfied—if you want to earn big money instead of "peasant" wages, mail the coupon or a post card, or a letter for this free book now. Don't wait a minute. Do it right now.

Address:

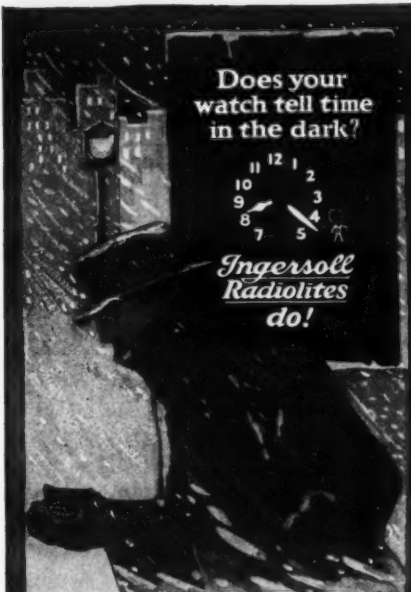
**NATIONAL SALESMEN'S TRAINING ASSOCIATION**  
Dept. 4-C Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A.

**National Salesmen's Training Assn., Dept. 4-C**  
No obligation on my part please send me full information about the N. S. T. A. Training and Employment Service. Also a list showing places of business with openings for salesmen.  
Name..... Street..... City..... State.....



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Does your watch tell time in the dark?




**Ingersoll Radiolites do!**

**THE** Ingersoll Radiolite is the all-weather watch. In the wind, snow and dark—when you can't light a match—the Radiolite glows the correct time as clear as day. And on these dark mornings more than ever you need a time-in-the-dark watch under your pillow.


Be sure that it is a genuine Radiolite, that you get—with INGERSOLL on the dial. This guarantees the time-keeping quality and the brightness and permanency of the glow.

The name "RADIOLITE" belongs to Ingersoll. There is no Radiolite but an Ingersoll Radiolite. It is registered with the U. S. Government. The hands and figures of a genuine Ingersoll Radiolite are coated with a substance containing real radium.

**ROBT. H. INGERSOLL & BRO.**  
 New York Chicago San Francisco  
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**Radiolite—**  
 Lowest-priced  
 Radiolite \$3.25  
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**Waterbury Radiolite—**  
 A jeweled Ingersoll  
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Illustrations  
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## Let the Next Pair be E. Z.

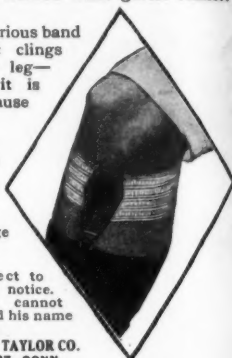
You learn something every day; the day you first wear the

## E. Z. GARTER

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you will have learned what garter comfort really means

The wide, luxurious band of soft elastic clings snugly to the leg—not because it is tight, but because it fits.



Single Grip E. Z.,  
 40c and 60c

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In medium, small, and large sizes.

Prices subject to change without notice. If your dealer cannot supply you, send his name and the price to

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Immediate possession on our liberal **Easy Monthly Payment plan**—the most liberal terms ever offered on a high grade bicycle.

Many parents advance the first payment and energetic boys by odd jobs—paper routes, delivery for stores, etc., make the bicycle earn money to meet the small payments.

**FACTORY TO RIDER** prices save you money. We make our bicycles in our own new model factory and sell direct to you. **44 STYLES**, colors and sizes in our famous **RANGER** line. Send for big, beautiful catalog.

**DELIVERED FREE** on Approval and **30 DAYS TRIAL**. Select the bicycle you want and terms that suit you—cash or easy payments. Write today for **FREE** catalog prices and terms.

**MEAD CYCLE COMPANY**  
 Dept. M35 Chicago



**Factory price direct to you**  
**This \$12 Officer Shoe**  
**Hand sewed. First Grade. \$6.00**  
**The factory price—direct to you at only . . . . \$6.00**

The retail price of this shoe is \$12.00. It is made of the best waterproof mahogany calf leather. Guaranteed to give the best wear. If these shoes are not just as we say, send them back. You don't lose a cent.

If you are sending money order or check, do not include postage. Pay only \$6.69 for shoes. We pay postage. State size.

**These shoes are built to be good for work and dress at the same time.**  
**U. S. NATIONAL ARMY SHOE CO.**  
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**Raincoat FREE**

Yes, we will give you a splendid grey worsted water-proof top coat in the latest style—of fine material—snug smart belt—roomy patch pockets. Write in at once if you want this wonderful coat free, but don't wait. This offer is only open for a limited time. Write in now to

**GOODYEAR MFG. CO., Dept. 1403**  
Goodyear Building, Kansas City, Mo.

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Do you want to increase your income by home study in your spare time? We have just published a new catalog of home self helps that will show you how. No matter what your line of work you will find in our FREE CATALOG of self-help books many valuable suggestions as to how you can easily increase your income. Especially valuable to all interested in Electricity, the Automobile, Machine Shop, carpentry, Painting, Farm Mechanics and Machinery, Gas and Steam Engineering, Railroad and Modern Languages.

Sent ABSOLUTELY FREE. A postal will bring it. Send for your copy now.

**Frederick J. Drake & Co.**  
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If so, you are NOT wearing

**Buchstein's Vulcanized Fiber** which is soothing to your stump, cool, neat, light, walls not much thicker than a silver dollar, strong.

Guaranteed 5 Years

Sold on easy payments to good people. Send for Catalog today.

K. Buchstein Co., 113 6th St., S. Minneapolis, Minn.

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Send now for information on the famous Feuchtinger Method. A course of easy, silent exercises for the vocal organs. Used at home. Makes weak, harsh and husky voices strong and clear. Special attention to stammering and lisping. Recommended by greatest singers and speakers of Europe. No matter how hopeless your case may seem, send for literature.

**Write Today** for our literature, absolutely FREE and postage prepaid. Send for it now.

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Brooks Appliance Co., 212 C State St., Marshall, Mich.

## Big Profits in Vulcanizing Little Capital Needed

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We manufacture the Anderson steam vulcanizer and the Anderson re-tread machine and teach you the Famous Anderson Method of vulcanizing. With an Anderson you can get the cream of the business regardless of competition, because you can guarantee the work to outlast the remainder of the tire. We can show you that the Anderson machine and method does superior work at a cost of less than 10 per cent. of that required for all other vulcanizers. This means satisfied customers and bigger profits.

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We expect Anderson vulcanizers to do first-class work and expect our students to make good in a business way, their success is our success. Therefore we do not sell an Anderson vulcanizer to anyone who has not received our course of instructions. It costs you nothing to investigate this wonderful opportunity. Write today for full particulars and address of Anderson school nearest you.

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32 Williams Bldg., Indianapolis, U. S. A.  
Print Your Name to Avoid Mistakes

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Supreme quality is what you naturally expect in any garment offered by this old established firm of Baird-North Company and you will be delighted with the splendid values in our Spring Style Book.

### All Wool French Serge Dress

12A317—Navy Blue Only. As an aspect of Baird-North value, note this beautiful, stylish "straight line" dress of All Wool French Serge, an ideal spring weight fabric. Braid-bound at neck and braid-trimmed on the stylish narrow string belt and on tabs giving effect of pockets. Neat rows of buttons on front panels and tabs lend a pleasing finish. Sizes: 14 to 20 for Misses with 36-in. skirt. 24 to 46 for Women with 39-in. skirt.

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One of many smart styles at lowest prices for high Baird-North quality. China Piping Straw in drooping brim style so generally becoming. Plaiting of satin on brim is overlaid with a handsome wreath of vari-colored satin and velvet flowers, and satin foliage and grasses. Splendid value at..... **\$7.50**

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You will be delighted with the beautiful things shown in the Baird-North Style Book at prices amazingly low for guaranteed high quality. Coats, suits, dresses, lingerie, millinery, hosiery, shoes, etc. Send today!

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Name.....  
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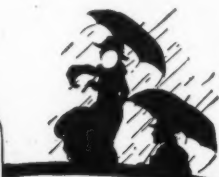
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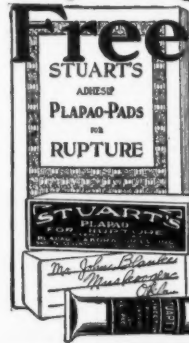
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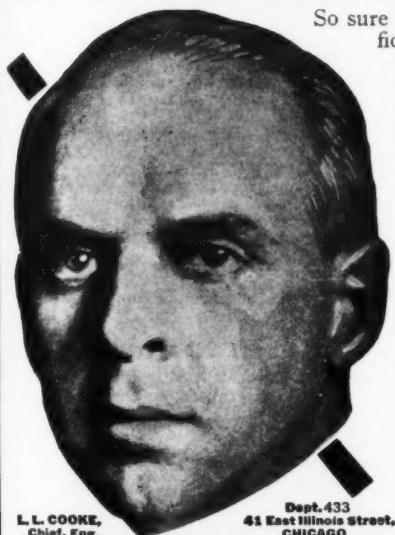
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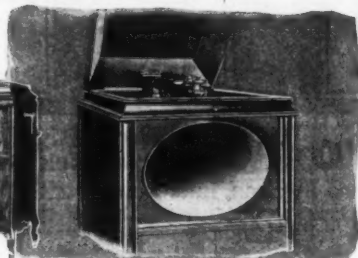
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